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An adaptive reuse project by John Puttick Associates transforms a disused power station into a vibrant youth centre

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FROM THE EDITOR



A new report on gender equality in the profession commissioned by RIBA attempts to put a conciliatory spin on the sad truth that little has altered, 20 years after the organisation's first major report on the subject. That survey looked explicitly at why women were quitting architecture.

Undertaken with the Fawcett Society, which claims to be the leading charity campaigning for gender equality and women's rights, the new report, somewhat hopefully titled 'Build it Together,' shows that the unequal status quo remains. With the intervening financial crash and pandemic having exacerbated the situation, the architecture profession still struggles to support women as they navigate hurdles such as child rearing and unequal pay; both being fairly long-established obstacles, as far as barriers go.

In her foreword to the new report, RIBA chief executive Valerie Vaughan-Dick said the profession "has also been too slow in addressing longstanding attitudes and mindsets that have led to gender inequality." And possibly most worrying, given we might expect architecture to be a more enlightened world than most, inequality is "particularly felt by women from minority ethnic backgrounds who are too often faced with tackling issues, such as discrimination and misogyny." Maybe this industry is more 'macho' than anyone would like to admit.

She added that the new findings "paint a similar picture to those in the 2003 report. Harassment, inappropriate behaviour, unequal pay, and poor working conditions are just some of the concerns that have not gone away." There are 47 recommendations in the new report – 13 on workplace culture alone for practices to address. That's a lot, however they make up an important wish list, from having equality and diversity policies, monitoring diversity, and conducting regular staff surveys, to having "a specific strategy and process to support people going on, and returning to work from, maternity leave." Also, the report says the RIBA should "refuse to charter practices that do not meet a base level of standards."

Depressing though it may be to realise that things haven't changed much in 20 years, maybe it's not a shock, whereas it is perhaps shocking to hear that 83% of the 635 people surveyed said they "felt that having children had negatively affected their career progression." Although 68 of these were men, it's an uncomfortable truth that women still do the vast majority of childcare. Until the profession achieves the flexibility to not only support women during the major challenges of maternity leave and returning to work, and perhaps equally importantly, we start to accept that men should do an equal – or more equal – role child rearing, we will see the same findings in 20 years.

Capitalism wants the maximum 'productivity' from each employee above all else; it's not really concerned about people's lives. Engineering is needed, either by individual 'allies' within companies, or more generally as a society to include space for people's lives to flourish alongside work – and thereby support their effectiveness as employees. Such intervention is probably the only way we can expect change.

James Parker, Editor

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ON THE COVER...

Fusebox in Blackburn by John Puttick Associates transforms a historic power station into a vibrant youth centre.

Cover image © Gareth Gardner
For the full report on this project, go to page 24

TIMBER CONSTRUCTION

Reframing structural timber

James Parker visited timber frame producers and residential schemes to discover how Scotland dispels myths that are holding England back from wider adoption.

I was recently fortunate to be the only journalist invited by the Structural Timber Association to join a delegation of housebuilders, industry bodies and even representatives from banks, to learn lessons from Scotland that support the case for timber frame in mainstream housebuilding. It was packed with visits to timber frame factories, developments across north-eastern Scotland, and a coastal forest, to explore the often brief journey taken by structural timber from source to finished home.

Timber frame is by far the commonest method of building houses in Scotland; 92% of new homes are constructed using the method – contrasting with the English housebuilding sector, which in 2019 built only 9% of homes using timber frame. A substantial chunk of Scotland is forestry (19%, which the Scottish Government hopes to grow to 21% by 2032), whereas only 10% of England is woodland, but there is a target to double this by 2050.

This lack of locally available timber only partly explains the low usage of timber frame in England, given that the usage levels in Scotland are so out of proportion to the relative supply levels. And, with the Scottish and English climates not being drastically different, and buildings arguably facing a harsher time north of the border, it is arguably more about cultural mindsets and received wisdom on timber frame, which this trip was designed to help shift.

Our diverse group included Tom Smith, head of architectural design at housebuilder Avant Homes; and one of the designers present keen to see the potential for transferring mainstream Scottish experience southwards. Architect, sustainability campaigner and Stirling Prize jury member Anna Lisa McSweeney from Built By Nature also witnessed the various everyday ways timber frame was being employed.

The group included several other SME housebuilders, eager to learn approaches from Scotland; also present were Strata Homes, Croudace Homes, and Newett



Homes, as well as Untypical Group (Hopkins and Tilia Homes), alongside Miller Group and Persimmon from the volume side. We were treated to some eye-opening tours around higher-end Scottish home developments by Cala Homes and Kirkwood Homes – the latter demonstrating how they had evolved from homebuilding to creating their own offsite supply via a timber frame factory. And Bancon Homes showed how, working with timber frame firm Deeside, timber was providing the ideal, fast, high performance solution for social housing schemes too.

Other leading technical figures present were Rachel Witcherley, technical manager at Homes England, and Lewis Taylor, principal technical specialist at NHBC, plus John Kirby, executive director of timber accreditation body PEFC. Further practical perspectives came from influential engineers; Adam Tilford, technical and innovation manager at Vistry Group, and Richard Lankshear, director at the Future Homes Hub. Lastly, trade body Swedish Wood gave the Scandinavian view, while Lloyds and Barclays Bank were exploring the consumer drivers for timber frame, including the funding implications.

As you can see, there was a useful breadth to the group and the ability for a range of perspectives to be aired at both the manufacturing facilities visited (West Fraser's Inverness OSB plant, James Jones' I-joist factory in Forres, and the John Gordon & Son sawmill in Nairn), and developments in Banchory and Aberdeen.



The view was expressed several times that in order to achieve the huge uplift in homes delivery needed to get even close to the 1.5 million mark by the 2029 deadline, all sensible solutions (and principally timber frame as well as brick and block) were needed in the mix. It is not an either/or, and the key issue is that in England the housebuilding sector needs to try and move away from the persistent stigma attached to timber frame. But to achieve sustainability targets as well as the sector's delivery targets (for example on embodied carbon), UK supply of timber, and particularly English supply, needs to ramp up. A case in point; the West Fraser factory we visited is the only one in the UK, excepting Ireland.

Forget World in Action, it's timber in action!

It seems somewhat hard to believe, but a single 1983 *World in Action* ITV documentary, 'The System Builder' created a deep stigma in England around timber in housebuilding, which arguably still exists. Picking on a few examples of Barratt Homes projects, it saw the timber frame market tank, and a widespread loss of trust in the method. It has been a long slow road to rebuilding consumer trust, despite the fact that timber roof trusses have remained the default fit-for-purpose option for mainstream housebuilding since then.

The image has been compounded by perceived fire issues (down to fires during construction), and cost of offsite-based approaches. However, recent widespread

shortages of brickies is making brick and block less easy to pursue as a default.

Finding a different path

One of the key insights expressed several times on the trip was that mindsets need to change within the industry on the usability of C16 softwood timber, particularly given that the UK produces a large amount of it. According to several delegates and hosts on the sites visited, many applications where more expensive, denser C24 is required would be adequately served by C16, and this could be essential to support the growth of UK supply called for in the 2023 Timber in Construction Road Map which the Government has taken forward.

John Kirby of PEFC explained: “A lot of housebuilders will use imported C24 structural timber, possibly from Scandinavia, but we’re trying to maximise the use of C16.” He said that the ‘strength class’ requirement dictating the use of C24 wasn’t always needed: “The classes are applied in bending, so in a joist situation, and in studwork there’s very little difference in capacity of a C16 and C24, and the difference in span is only about 11%.”

The SME builders on the trip said their viewpoints and assumptions had already shifted away from adherence brick and block, and the visits merely confirmed their newfound confidence in pursuing timber frame for home developments.

Tom Smith of Avant Homes said that things were already changing in England, driven by the high delivery targets; however caveatted that Build to Rent (BTR) or social housing more widely might be more viable than private sale for many developers, with less focus on absorption rates, and giving “guaranteed revenue.” With a declining housing market, there was even a disincentive for the speed of build timber offers, he said.

He added that a scenario where the majority of a site being timber frame BTR properties (“lower profit margin, but quicker return”), could see a trickle effect to timber in private sale units on the same site.

Jim Simpson of Strata Homes was an example of a firm embodying the change towards timber frame, from long being faithful adherents of brick and block. “Throughout my career, I’ve considered brick and block construction to be the



only real option for building homes,” he told me. “During the management of a recent project my perspective has shifted; I’ve come to see timber frame as not just a realistic alternative, but often a smarter, more efficient way to build.”

The PEFC’s John Kirby summed up the trip’s importance for changing views on the possibilities of building in timber to meet carbon targets: “It’s been a positive couple of days, and changed some minds.”

TALL BUILDINGS

Council on Tall Buildings rebrands, moving focus from skyscrapers to ‘vertical urbanism’

The Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat has rebranded as the Council for Vertical Urbanism (CVU) to reflect a global refocus on “vertical ecosystems” away from tall buildings as a goal in themselves.

The Council commented on the organisation’s “evolving” identity: “The world has changed, cities face new pressures, from the effect of climate change to housing affordability, and tall buildings alone can’t solve them.”

The CVU said this move “recognises and validates that vertical urbanism has emerged as a legitimate philosophy, discipline and global movement, shaping the way cities around the world confront the challenges of the 21st century.”

CEO Javier Quintana de Una commented: “We are widening the lens; vertical urbanism isn’t just about

height; it’s about designing upward in smarter, more integrated ways to deliver sustainable, connected and human-centred cities.”

Scott Duncan, board member at the CVU and design partner at SOM said: “We are witnessing as an urban population a transformation from height as the goal, to quality and nuance.”

The CVU explained vertical urbanism as “a new way to imagine a city, as a system; connected, liveable, and resilient.” Duncan added that new urban architecture was set to respond more strongly and sensitively to existing fabric: “We are entering a period where we have very mature cities with a rich variety of buildings, and now the next set of additions to that ecosystem are going to be much more intelligent and symbiotic in the way they relate to other buildings.”



Quintana de Una commented that a focus on community engagement in design was key to vertical urbanism: “The success of buildings now has to do with how the community enjoys them, how they connect to infrastructure, and the experience of the user, and there’s a new group of people who have a say in the design of these buildings.”



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STIRLING PRIZE

Wetherford Watson Mann wins Stirling Prize for social housing complex

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has named a social housing complex for over-65s by Wetherford Watson Mann Architects, as the winner of the RIBA Stirling Prize 2025.

Replacing an abandoned care home, Appleby Blue Almshouse “radically reimagines the traditional almshouse,” said RIBA, “flipping the centuries-old typology by placing shared spaces at its heart to foster community and reduce isolation among residents.” The development contains 59 bright, spacious flats arranged in a U-shape around a central courtyard.

Homes with “discreet accessibility features” offer an “aspirational living environment, in stark contrast to the institutional atmosphere often associated with older people’s housing.” Large kitchen windows draw in natural daylight and provide residents with uninterrupted views of the garden courtyard. A variety of plants, trees and a gentle water feature that echoes throughout the building “gives a sense of a woodland oasis, allowing residents a constant connection to a green space in the heart of London.”

Light-flooded, terracotta paved hallways connect the flats and contain customisable planters and benches, forming a “social corridor” that encourages spontaneous interaction among residents. Cleverly designed automated vents alongside the



double-glazed windows allow the corridors to collect heat in the winter to create a warm winter garden for residents, and release heat to stay cooler in the summer.

Above, a generous roof terrace provides a “colourful, transportive communal space” for residents, where the planting beds have been raised to accommodate accessibility needs.

At street level, floor-to-ceiling bay windows create a strong social connection between residents and the surrounding community. A direct view of the bus stop on the main street allows for chance interactions and residents to observe the daily bustle of city life. A varied public calendar of events also helps draw people inside to the warm, timber-clad shared spaces.

The double-height public “garden room” and community kitchen provide spaces for everyone to come together and socialise, offering residents a form of co-living centred around communal spaces.

RIBA added: “Remarkable collaboration and meticulous attention to detail between Wetherford Watson Mann Architects and

the client, United St Saviour’s Charity, has created a serene, social and profoundly transformational environment for the users of Appleby Blue, where the importance of the residents’ mental and physical wellbeing are each treated with equal significance and priority.”

Appleby Blue gently reimagines later living as a collective experience, drawing its residents together in spaces that elevate the everyday. The result is a “pioneering model for designing high-quality housing for later living, where care and dignity are embedded into the design throughout.”

The 2025 award panel was chaired by Ingrid Schroder, director of The AA School of Architecture, and included Anna Lisa McSweeney, UK network lead, Built by Nature; Chris Williamson, RIBA president; Neill McClements, director, Grimshaw; Simon Gillis, technical director at Autodesk; Victoria Tang-Owen, Creative Director, designer, consultant and brand collaborator (Lay Assessor).

Appleby Blue Almshouse was also awarded the RIBA Client of the Year Award, and the Neave Award for Housing.



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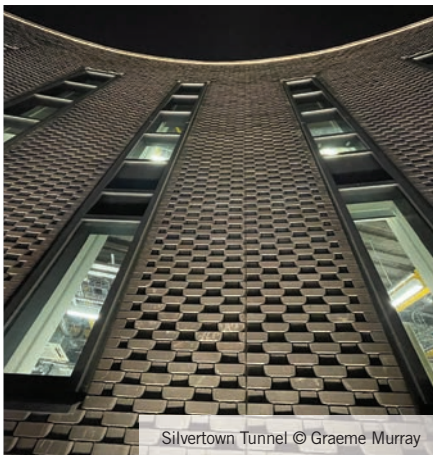
Brick Awards 2025: The winners

Presented by the Brick Development Association at a ceremony in London on 5 November, the awards celebrated professionals and firms across the industry who are “demonstrating the potential of clay brick as a modern, innovative, and future-proof material,” commented organisers the Brick Development Association. The winners were chosen by judging panel against criteria of “design excellence, craftsmanship, sustainability performance and visual impact.”

Supreme Winner, Craftsmanship & Contractors' Choice

Project: Silvertown Tunnel
Brick manufacturer: Ketley Brick Company Ltd
Architect: dRMM

Silvertown Tunnel is a twin bore 1.4 km road tunnel with two lanes in each direction including dedicated bus lanes. This tunnel is to relieve congestion on the Victorian-era Blackwall Tunnel and construction has taken just under five years to complete. dRMM proposed clay brick articulation to areas of the facade to create prominent architectural brick landmarks at both ends



Silvertown Tunnel © Graeme Murray

of the tunnel, serving as gateway markers of strategic infrastructure importance and housing essential services and workspaces for the tunnel operator.

Individual House

Project: W House
Brick manufacturer: Forterra Plc
Architect: Bureau de Change
W House is a full refurbishment and extension of a late Victorian semi-detached house in Fulham. Interventions were carefully sculpted throughout the house to create better visual connections and improve the flow both horizontally across each floor as well as vertically throughout the house.

Housing Development

Project: Lambton Park
Brick manufacturer: Wienerberger Ltd
Architect: Pod
Located nine miles north of Durham City centre, this development is situated on the estate grounds of Lambton Park, the ancestral seat of the Earl of Durham, with heritage stretching back to the 11th Century. Drawing from the historic buildings on the estate including gatehouses and Bournmoor Church, the design reflects this rich architectural language replicating and re-inventing the polychromatic brickwork patterning and detailing.

Large Housing Development

Project: Bulrush Court
Brick manufacturer: Ibstock Plc & Michelmersh Brick Holdings Plc
Architect: Pitman Tozer Architects
Bulrush Court, Leaside Lock is the second phase of a major residential redevelopment by The Guinness Partnership in Bromley by Bow, London. The project forms a key part of a 950-home masterplan and delivers 144 high quality affordable homes in a mid-rise mansion block.

Urban Regeneration

Project: Ross Street Mews
Brick manufacturer: Wienerberger Ltd
Architect: Studiorogers Architects
Ross Street Mews is a transformative, housing-led regeneration scheme that redefines the potential of small-scale development in deprived urban contexts. Located in the Falls area of West Belfast, the project delivers not only high-quality homes but measurable social, environmental and economic value.

House Builder

Crest Nicholson
Developments: Brooklands & Gloucester Quays
Brick manufacturer: Ibstock Plc
Crest Nicholson is a leading UK residential developer with a proud heritage of over 55 years in delivering high-quality homes and vibrant communities across the South of England and the Midlands. Their work is rooted in a commitment to thoughtful placemaking, sustainability, and craftsmanship – evident in the widespread use of high-quality materials, including traditional clay bricks.

Commercial

Project: Island
Brick manufacturer: Furness
Architect: Cartwright Pickard
Located within the St Ann's conservation area in the heart of Manchester, Island is a new generation of workspace. While modern and contemporary in appearance, it has been designed to be sympathetic to its context and to celebrate local heritage. The building is designed to be net zero carbon, Nabers 5*, BREEAM Excellent, and WELL-enabled. Island encourages a new hybrid model of working, where seamless technology combines with a scheme design that enables people to work fluidly.

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Public

Project: BEAM

Brick manufacturer: HG Matthews

Architect: Bennetts Associates

BEAM is a multi-purpose arts and culture venue presenting live performance and film, alongside an all-day cafe/bar and events spaces for community use, located alongside the River Lea in the historic town centre of Hertford, designed by Bennetts Associates. The project transforms and extends the former Hertford Theatre to create a building with a far greater range of facilities. The design incorporates the shell of the old theatre and its stage and backstage areas, but adds significant new spaces in a series of brick-clad volumes.

Education

Project: Pembroke Mill Lane

Brick manufacturers: Reclaimed & Coleford Brick and Tile

Architect: Haworth Tompkins

This project forms part of the most significant expansion of Pembroke College since the fourteenth century, providing a range of public and collegiate spaces within new and existing buildings, in a highly complex site in the historic city centre of Cambridge. The existing site was densely planned, with a highly varied scale and character of predominantly brick-built buildings that reflected the historic evolution of uses from industrial and residential to University functions.

Refurbishment

Project: Tileyard North

Brick manufacturer: Michelmersh Brick Holdings Plc

Architect: Hawkins\Brown

Tileyard North forms the final phase in a ten-acre regeneration of Wakefield's waterfront, transforming the long-derelict Grade II listed Rutland Mills into a nationally significant creative campus. Sitting adjacent to The Hepworth Wakefield gallery, this once-isolated industrial site is now the UK's largest creative industries hub outside London, delivering 135,000 m² of studios, workspaces, educational facilities and event venues.

Innovation

Project: TIDE Bankside

Brick Manufacturer: Wienerberger Ltd

Architect: Squire & Partners

TIDE Bankside is a Net Zero embodied and operational carbon workspace



development, taking its place as a key player in the ongoing renewal of London's Bankside. A stone's throw from the Tate Modern, the Globe Theatre, and the Thames riverbanks, the area's rich cultural and material heritage has informed the distinctive facade design, which marries organic forms and traditional London building stock with cutting-edge technology.

Specialist Brickwork Contractor

Swift Brickwork Contractors Ltd

Project 1: The Oren

Brick manufacturer: Non UK

Architect: Stanton Williams

Project 2: The Bishops Stortford High School

Brick manufacturer: Michelmersh Brick Holdings Plc

Architect: Bond Bryan

Swift Brickwork Contractors Ltd pride themselves on being at the forefront of the brickwork, blockwork, and masonry industry in the UK. Their reputation for precision, innovation, and commitment to sustainability is well-earned. They excel in delivering complex projects across residential, commercial, and public sectors. Their unwavering dedication to client satisfaction truly sets them apart as industry leaders.

Worldwide

Project: The City of Indigenous Arts

Architect: Estudio MMX

In the heart of Tepic, Mexico stands the "City for Indigenous Arts" (CAI for

its acronym in Spanish). The complex materialises the multicultural identity of the region through architecture, landscape, mobility, and urban interventions. Composed of four buildings, open spaces, and the intervention for the Mololoa River, the CAI gives place to gatherings, commerce, exhibition, and teaching of handicraft production techniques, while generating open areas for resting and leisure with new paving, lighting, urban furniture and extensive complementary vegetation.

Architect's Choice

Project: Marylebone Place

Brick manufacturers: Bulmer Brick & Tile Co Ltd, Michelmersh Brick Holdings Plc & Wienerberger Ltd

Marylebone Place is the thoughtful reinvention of a 1930s neo-Georgian office building, formerly known as Marylebone House, located on one of London's most prominent thoroughfares. Completed in 2023, the redevelopment, led by Fletcher Priest Architects for Beltane Asset Management, successfully integrated a contemporary workplace into a predominantly residential conservation area.

Sustainability

Project: The Bustardthorpe Development York Racecourse

Brick manufacturer: York Handmade Brick Company

Architect: Dawson Williamson Architects

The Bustardthorpe Development was designed and constructed in accordance with the ambitious strategy and action plan of Green Knivesmire 300, York Racecourse's commitment to sustainability. The commitment is embedded in the belief from everyone working within York racecourse that they are custodians of the land and the buildings and therefore have a duty to take care of the environment and its place in the local community. For this reason, every aspect of the design and build was considered to have the lowest possible environmental impact, from energy creation to water use, materials and the team needed to build it. It was particularly important to use local suppliers including 70,000 locally thrown handmade clay bricks, both to support the local economy and reduce emissions through transport.

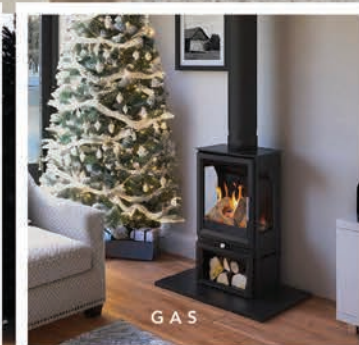
More information on the winners & commended projects can be found on the BDA's website: www.brick.org.uk



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COMMENT

Ceramics' creative freedom

Ceramic cladding can offer designers creative freedom by uniting 'timeless materiality' with modern performance. So says Robert Ffello of Ceramics UK, exploring how ceramics are increasingly used to shape contemporary buildings, bringing versatility, sustainability, and innovation.



Ceramics have been part of the built environment for thousands of years, from the bricks and tiles of ancient settlements to the distinctive facades of 20th century modernism. Today, the material stands at the heart of a renewed design conversation, offering the means to combine enduring performance with expressive freedom of form and finish.

At a time when both sustainability and distinctiveness are crucial to construction, ceramics occupy a unique space. Their composition from abundant natural materials, longevity, and recyclability resonate strongly with today's focus on low-impact, circular building approaches. Yet the appeal of ceramics extends beyond their environmental credentials into the realm of creative possibility.

Tradition reimaged

The visual and tactile qualities of ceramics remain deeply embedded in building culture. The warmth of a brick wall, the rhythm of a tiled roof, or the intricacy of ceramic ornamentation instantly

connect people to their surroundings. Yet ceramics are not bound to the past. Advances in manufacturing techniques allow the same material to be reinterpreted for contemporary needs, whether as precision-engineered units for modular construction, rainscreen cladding with innovative finishes, or surfaces that respond to complex geometries.

This means ceramics are a bridge between tradition and modernity. A project can draw on the familiarity and trust that ceramic materials inspire, while still delivering a facade or interior expression that feels wholly new. The capacity to specify form, colour, glaze, and texture opens up creative avenues that few other materials can match.

Freedom of form & finish

One of the defining strengths of ceramics lies in their adaptability. Whether through extrusion, pressing, or cutting, ceramic units can be produced to precise dimensions, supporting complex detailing



and geometric flexibility. From crisp rectilinear forms to fluid curves, the designer's imagination is supported and inspired, rather than constrained.

Equally, the surface finish of ceramics offers a rich palette. Textures can range from smooth, reflective glazes to natural, hand-crafted tactility. Colouration is both durable and versatile, spanning earthy, muted tones through to vibrant, bespoke hues that withstand weathering without fading. This duality of structural precision and aesthetic diversity allows ceramics to function simultaneously as a technical solution and an artistic medium.

The sustainable agenda

Freedom of design is now inseparable from responsibility in design. Materials are increasingly expected to support lower carbon outcomes across the building lifecycle. Ceramics provide a strong response to this challenge. Their inherent durability ensures longevity with minimal maintenance, reducing whole-life costs and environmental burdens. Many ceramic products also incorporate recycled content, while manufacturers' end of life reuse or recycling routes continue to expand.

In facade design, particularly ceramics contribute to energy efficiency when applied as part of high-performance building envelopes. The ability to combine aesthetic flexibility with robust building fabric performance supports the delivery of both visual and environmental objectives.

Integration with modern methods

The evolution of construction methods has not sidelined ceramics; instead, it has enhanced their relevance. Prefabricated panels incorporating ceramic units, digital modelling for bespoke cladding elements, and advanced manufacturing that accommodates parametric design are all enabling ambitious visions to be realised with confidence.

This integration with digital and offsite approaches is particularly significant for those working at the intersection of creativity and

Freedom of design is now inseparable from responsibility in design

delivery. It means ceramics can be deployed at scale in a way that respects both programme and quality demands, without compromising originality of design.

Material as identity

Buildings serve as markers of identity, both for communities and for the individuals who occupy them. Ceramics, with their varied forms and finishes, allow architecture to carry this symbolic role. A ceramic facade can reference local heritage while presenting a striking contemporary profile. A tiled interior can merge cultural symbolism with modern performance needs. The material thus becomes not just a practical solution, but a medium of expression and meaning.

Across the UK and internationally, there are already compelling demonstrations of how ceramics can animate the built environment – from civic and cultural landmarks to residential developments where facade treatments create individuality within large-scale schemes. The scope for innovation remains vast.

Looking forward

As design practice continues to evolve, the need for materials that combine technical rigour with creative opportunity will only grow. Ceramics offer a future facing material solution: robust enough to meet demanding performance standards, yet flexible enough to deliver originality and identity.

They represent not a constraint but an invitation to explore form, surface, and symbolism that enrich how we experience buildings. The material's history may extend to ancient times, but its role in shaping the future of design is only beginning to be fully realised.

Robert Ffello is chief executive of Ceramics UK



Avoiding failures when specifying tile adhesives

Tile adhesive manufacturer Palace Chemicals offers a RIBA-approved CPD entitled: *'Successful specification of wall & floor tiling and how to avoid common failures'*. Here Nick Bratt, national technical sales manager, outlines some key points regarding substrates, which will help specifiers avoid problems.

Success or failure of a tiling project will in part be determined by procedures and practices employed by the tile fixer on-site. However, decisions taken at the specification stage will also have a critical impact on the ultimate success of the project.

One of the most important aspects is to correctly specify the substrate on to which tiles are going to be fixed. For example, timber is unsuitable for direct tiling, as it can distort and create excessive movement beneath the tiled finish, leading to cracks, loose tiles and debonding.

If a timber substrate has to be used, a suitable waterproofing/tanking membrane prior to tiling should be installed. Since the publication of British Standard BS 5385 Part 1: 2018, plywood has not been considered a suitable background for direct wall tiling.

The latest revision to the British Standard, BS 5385 Part 3: 2024 stresses the importance of using appropriate materials for direct tiling, and states that timber boards are no longer recommended for direct floor tiling.

In addition to providing enhanced adhesion with greater weight loadings than timber, a bespoke backer board will also form a waterproof and well-insulated substrate to which tiling can be applied directly.

Plaster and plasterboard, which are very common wall substrates, can also pose issues. For example, both are sensitive to moisture and should not be used in wet areas.

Floor tiling is often applied to a screeded surface, which can be either a cement:sand screed or an anhydrite screed. The main problems occurring when tiling to cement:sand screeds relate to shrinkage during the curing process. Tiling on to a screed that is not cured can lead to lifting of tiles. The recommended solution for tiling to green screeds is to use a suitable anti-fracture membrane.

If tiling on to anhydrite screeds, one of three different solutions can be implemented to avoid system failure. Either typically wait up to 80 days, in the case of a 60 mm screed, and at 75% RH use varying dilutions of SBR primer and cement-based adhesive, or at 85% RH use a gypsum-based adhesive, which enables a reduction in drying time or, and this is the best solution, specify a fast-track proprietary anhydrite screed preparation system. This can be applied when the relative humidity of the screed is as high as 95% – normally achieved within seven days. In addition to eliminating ettringite formation, this speeding up of the process has a major benefit with regard to project planning and schedules.

Supplied by Nick Bratt, national technical sales manager for Palace Chemicals

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INDUSTRY VIEWFINDER

Revisiting the Skyline: Considerations for the Future of Tall Buildings

Introduction

The future prognosis for the design and building of tall buildings presents a myriad of challenges for architects. One of ADF's first Industry Viewfinder surveys, in 2021, sought the views and opinions of architects on this subject, focusing particularly on the impact of the pandemic as well as safety and sustainability concerns. But with global headwinds from economic stresses for clients to climate change and materials inflation, has the focus turned further away from tall buildings since the post-pandemic boom, to something far different in urban settings?

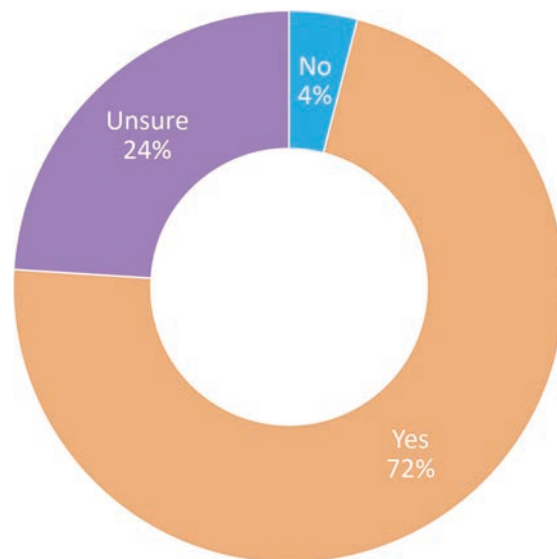
Vertical urbanism has begun to place deep roots across the world as a compelling concept, away from tall towers with little interaction with the street level to much more connected, liveable, and human scaled urban clusters. Reflecting a pivot away from commercially-driven 'tall above all' precepts, global body the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH) recently changed its focus with a new name of the Council on Vertical Urbanism, but saying its "core mission remains; advancing the knowledge and practice of upward growth."

But many clients and architects are pursuing more sustainable, less tall building-oriented projects, enhanced by planting and more climate-friendly buildings, bringing more value for their communities. As shown in our 2021 as well as new audience research, 'urbanism'-oriented projects are going to be powered by more mixed use business plans than narrow office or residential typologies, but still present a wide range of new challenges.

In the two prior decades, building vertically had been the dominant approach in many urban conurbations for commercial, residential and mixed use projects. The post-Covid phase saw businesses less likely to invest in urban centres, following a slowdown in urban construction during the pandemic, and the

new building safety regime post-Grenfell resulted in new pressures placed on tall residential structures, at least.

Our 2021 survey looked to discover what kind of future respondents generally saw for tall buildings, whether they could be built sustainably, and what were the biggest challenges facing architects, on a global scale. The responses were varied, with some opinions quite clearly widely shared, and others more case-specific. There was a resounding consensus, echoed in the more recent study, that future tall buildings would need to be mixed



Is mixed use going to become the dominant 'use class' for tall buildings?



VALCAN
The Defining Standard

use, and respondents were generally optimistic that passive design approaches and other sustainable innovations were achievable in tall buildings.

Since that survey, the industry has seen the implementation of the Building Safety Act in 2022, which brought about a number of changes including the Gateway approach as recommended in the Hackitt Report, and the introduction of the Golden Thread. Towns and cities have seen commuters return, therefore potentially making tall urban projects more viable once again.

With so much having changed and evolved since 2021, it's interesting to gain fresh insight on how architects feel about the future of tall buildings, including their perspectives on the new building safety measures and how these have impacted their projects.

We also repeated several of our 2021 questions in order to make a direct comparison and evaluate how opinions and views have changed on the viability of tall buildings. The first question immediately sheds light on the future of tall buildings itself, with 56% of architects saying they have not been involved in the design of tall or high-rise buildings; however in 2021 that figure was 71%, indicating that uptake has in fact increased.

While some views in our new study bring clear conclusions – such as the fact the vast majority (72%) see mixed use as the dominant 'use class' for tall buildings – a few were inconclusive, indicating that architects are in urgent need of clearer guidance and clarification on how recent changes impact potential projects and whether they are truly viable going forward.

Survey findings: changing attitudes

Something that is immediately clear from our second, 2025 survey was that more architects are indeed working on tall buildings – albeit the number still not particularly high. In this survey, 44% of respondents said they have been involved in the design of tall or high rise buildings; not a particularly remarkable number on its own, but a significant increase on the 29% that said yes in 2021.

These findings tie in with those in the then-CTBUH's report that the number of completed high rise buildings globally has increased since the decline seen during Covid, and shows there is sustained demand for such buildings.

Mixed use dominance

Tall buildings having previously been criticised for being "impersonal," somewhat disconnected from the streets around them and the communities living and working among them, as well as typically catering to a more high-end, or non-residential market. It's one of the drivers behind a push for mixed use buildings that are better integrated into the area they're built within, with better street-level presence, with another driver being the long-term impact of Covid.

Confirming that the construction of high rise buildings exclusively for office use is unlikely, 72% of respondents said mixed use would be the dominant use class. However this is a slight decrease on 2021 when 85% said it would be, though this year we did give respondents the option of 'unsure,' which 24% chose. Only 4% said no, compared to 15% in 2021, which would suggest that there

are a reasonable number who don't feel confident either way. Could this be a result of legislative changes causing confusion, or a general reluctance from many architects to be involved in tall buildings at all?

This year's study results suggested the move from urban areas and office working during and shortly after Covid has not lasted in perhaps the way the industry thought it might, with less architects now seeing it as a contributing factor to opt for mixed use. An indication from our sample that more workers are in fact returning to urban office spaces, when hybrid working was previously dominant, this helps support the commercial case for tall buildings.

Sustainability

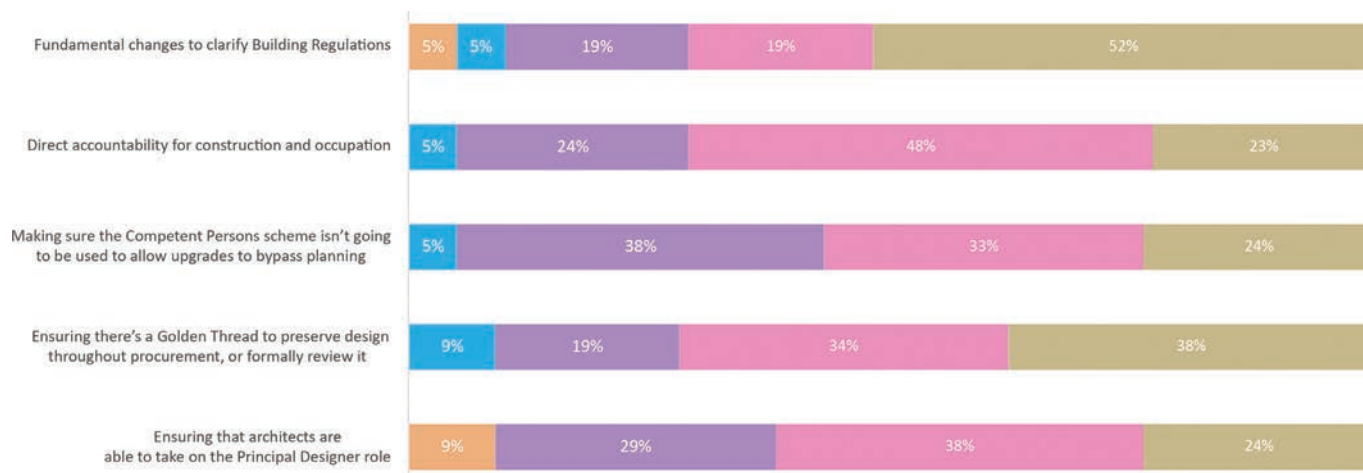
The sustainability credentials of tall buildings has been a particular source of debate thanks to various factors. These include the high embodied carbon of the materials – commonly concrete, steel and glass – used to construct them, their high operational energy use thanks to elements such as lifts, HVAC systems and artificial lighting, and even the impact of the shadows they create on neighbouring buildings and spaces. In particular, the use of glass as the dominant facade material in tall buildings causes challenges relating to both solar gain and loss, possibly leading to an overreliance on HVAC systems.

We asked respondents of both surveys whether tall buildings clad in glass will represent a sustainable option in the future given our shared global carbon goals, and the consensus is largely unchanged. In 2021 40% said yes, whereas in 2025 that figure was 29%, showing only a slight decrease and emphasising that the use of glass is indeed a concern from a sustainability perspective. However, perhaps more alarmingly, in our recent survey we also offered architects the option of 'unsure,' which was picked by 33% of respondents. Once again, according to our sample it would seem architects are unsure on their stance.

Looking further into sustainability factors, we asked how achievable passive design approaches are in UK tall buildings. In a slightly more positive comparison than the overall sustainability question, those ranking passive design as 'not at all achievable' dropped from 13% in 2021 to zero in 2025. Conversely, in 2021, 20% of architects said it was 'very achievable,' whereas in 2025 that had dropped to just 2%. However, with the percentage ranking it as 'achievable' increasing fairly significantly from 18% to 34%, it could be argued that while there is perhaps not as much confidence, there are still a similar number of architects seeing it as a possibility. Currently most architects seem to fall somewhere in the middle, not particularly confident either way. The mixed picture does ultimately indicate a lack of a definitive view on the possibilities of passive design in tall buildings.

With tall buildings having become the norm in many urban areas due to both the cost and lack of suitable land to build on, we asked our respondents should they be the preferred solution for high-value urban clusters? In 2021 49% responded no, and that figure changed only marginally this year, dropping to 43%. However, while in 2021 the remaining 51% opted for yes – the only other option presented at the time – in our 2025 survey we also offered 'unsure' as a





Which aspects of the post-Grenfell safety regime do you think requires the highest focus?

Low priority Slight priority Moderate priority High priority Very high priority

response, which was consequently chosen by 29%, the same figure choosing 'yes'. With responses split almost exactly down the middle previously, and a reasonable percentage opting for unsure this year, it's once again difficult to really decipher where architects stand based on our sample. This could be down to the many challenges facing designers of tall buildings outweighing the more obvious benefits they provide in densely populated urban areas.

Building Safety

Arguably more important than ever, safety has been a huge talking point for everyone in the industry following the Grenfell tragedy and subsequent Hackitt review and Building Safety Act. With multiple aspects to the safety regime, we asked which requires the highest focus. Respondents were asked to rank each aspect as one of five options ranging from low priority to very high priority.

The highest ranking option, selected as either very high or high priority by 88% combined in 2021 and 71% combined in 2025 was 'fundamental changes to clarify Building Regulations.' The fact this figure hasn't dropped much since the introduction of the Building Safety Act is somewhat alarming, as regulations in regards to safety should be clearer – but it would seem many architects would not agree.

Also ranked high or very high priority by a combined 71% of our cohort was 'direct accountability for construction and occupation,' versus 81% in 2021, and a combined 72% said 'ensuring there's a golden thread to preserve design throughout procurement, or formally review it,' compared with 71% in 2021. The introduction of the golden thread is presumably therefore welcomed by architects, and a positive indication that it will be adhered to and carried out. This also links with the need for direct accountability, with the golden thread making it clear who exactly is accountable and responsible for things at every stage of a building's life, among other improvements.

In our 2021 study, 'making sure the Competent Persons Scheme (CPS) isn't going to be used to allow upgrades to bypass planning' was ranked as high or very high priority by 76%, but recently that number dropped to 57% – the biggest drop among all the choices. With the CPS now applying to architects as well as contractors and installers, the fact less respondents view this as a high priority is hopefully an indication that the scheme is not being used to bypass planning, but has, as intended, helped to ensure that only competent people are carrying out and signing off work in tall building projects – a responsibility of the Principal Designer.

Challenges & solutions

Project delays

With so much regulatory change in the last few years, we asked our cohort if they've faced any postponements or delays to tall building projects. Unfortunately, a total of 58% said they have – the majority (26%) saying a project has been simply 'put on hold,' followed by 'faced a recall to planning' (16%), 'cancelled entirely' (11%) and finally 'postponed indefinitely' (5%).

However, when asked why projects have faced delays, safety was only the third most selected choice, by 27% of respondents. Ranking higher were financial issues (63%), and client design issues (46%). Therefore, according to our results, general economic uncertainty and instability have had a much greater negative impact than the Building Safety Act on tall buildings in the past three years.

Building Safety Act

The Building Safety Act has had a huge impact on projects and the architects designing them. But do they see it as a positive change overall? 43% of our respondents said they believe the Act has 'produced a more favourable environment for procuring buildings over 18 metres.' However, 24% said they don't believe it has, and a further 33% were once again 'unsure.'





How much can tall buildings be 'greened'?

The Act has also been the subject of criticism for causing a slowdown in the number of tall buildings being built. This has been specifically blamed on delays getting approval from the Building Safety Regulator (BSR), due to constrained resources, and claims the BSR is prioritising remediation projects over new builds. There is a significant backlog of Gateway 2 applications awaiting approval.

When asked if the Act has led to a growth in the commissioning of a greater number of buildings over 18 metres tall, unsurprisingly only 10% reported that it has, with 38% saying no and over half (52%) saying they are unsure.

A critical part of the Building Safety Act is the Gateway regime, with Gateway 2 in particular having a significant impact on architects. Of our respondents, 32% report they are supplying a 'moderate level of detail' at Gateway 2, and 10% say their applications include 'comprehensive information.' 26% say the information they supply is either 'basic' or 'very limited,' somewhat surprisingly.

Greening tall buildings

There are a number of solutions architects can utilise to boost the sustainability of tall building projects. While architects are seemingly on the fence as to whether solar activated facades are suitable (52% say yes), have concerns regarding fire safety when it comes to using timber (71%), and are unsure whether glass cladding is a sustainable option for the future (only 29% say it is), there are other solutions – big and small – that can positively impact the environment.

Opinions on the suitability of individual passive design approaches are also split, though almost all of our cohort (98%) think they are generally achievable. When we asked how much tall buildings can be 'greened,' no-one said this was impossible. However, the most popular choice was 45% saying it was possible 'to a moderate extent.'

We asked architects what green features they had implemented in tall building projects; topping the list was rainwater harvesting (74%), followed by native planting and landscaping, utilised by 63%. With some tall buildings post-Grenfell having received negative press for the comfort and living environment they can offer, features such as planting and landscaping that benefit residents and users can have a positive impact that extends beyond the environment.

SuDS, natural ventilation and cooling strategies, and green roofs and walls have all been utilised by 58% of respondents – some of which again have the added benefit of creating a more pleasant environment for building occupants. Other options chosen included solar shading, mechanical ventilation systems and fenestration choices. Only 5% of respondents said they aren't currently including any of the features we listed.

The ability of building users to control their own environment is another feature that can offer benefits to both the occupant and the environment. 58% of the architects we surveyed report that they are currently including 'moderate control (e.g. adjustable vents and windows)' in their tall building projects.

It's encouraging to see a reasonably significant number taking this beyond 'limited control,' which only 21% of respondents selected. 16% even claim to be including 'high control (e.g. fully personalised environmental settings).' Again, not only do these types of solution benefit the environment, but offer increased personal agency, alongside comfort, which can only boost the perception of tall buildings.

We would like to extend our thanks to our sponsors for supporting this Industry Viewfinder research project.

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BUILDING
PROJECTS

New power generation

FUSEBOX BLACKBURN

The transformation of one of the UK's first electricity power stations into a vibrant youth centre combines a respect for industrial heritage with a high voltage interior that's designed to excite its teenage users. Stephen Cousins reports.

Photography © Gareth Gardner





POWERING FUTURE GENERATIONS

John Puttick Associates' converted power station is something of an anomaly and a beacon of hope – as a vibrant new space where young people can come together, socialise, learn and have new experiences

Youngsters are of course crucial to the UK's future growth and prosperity, so it is troubling to learn that for over a decade, local authority expenditure on youth services in England has been in decline.

According to the latest figures from the YMCA, council expenditure on youth services in England has fallen by 73% since 2010-11, a real-terms cut of £1.2bn – and the number of youth centres has reduced by 62% over that time.

Given this bleak backdrop, Fusebox in Blackburn, by John Puttick Associates, represents something of an anomaly and a beacon of hope, a vibrant new space where young people can come together, socialise, learn and have new experiences.

Situated in the heart of town at the junction of George Street and Pilkington Street, the £3.1m youth centre involved the transformation of one of the UK's oldest electricity generating power stations, retrofitting two main parts of the heritage building complex: the L-shaped former power station, known locally as 'the Fusebox,' and parts of an existing

connected 'Youth Zone,' built in 2010.

The disused power station's richly decorated brick facade, and other features, were retained, and its interior spaces imaginatively adapted to incorporate a range of facilities focused on employment skills, training and opportunities for young people aged between 16 and 25.

Young people were actively involved in shaping the design, including several themed 'zones' including a 'Maker Zone,' 'Gamification Zone,' and a Music and Production Suite. Key challenges for the architect included the need to accommodate varying levels across the site and to deliver a vibrant space able to draw in a young crowd despite the anachronisms of a historic building.

John Puttick, director at John Puttick Associates told *ADF*: "Instead of just being a heritage project, the building had to have a certain kind of brightness and exist as an exciting environment. We achieved that through features such as the unusual lighting design and the inclusion of various artworks by local artist group. Many aspects relate to the

existing building and celebrate it, but are also deliberately new and not trying to be ‘heritage’ in appearance.”

National network

Fusebox is the latest in a national network of purpose-built, state-of-the-art Youth Zones targeted at the UK’s most economically disadvantaged areas.

The concept was pioneered in the mid-2000s by charity OnSide to provide high-quality, safe, and inclusive environments to help transform outcomes for disadvantaged youths aged eight to 25. Facilities typically operate in partnership with local councils, private donors and central government funding streams, and are staffed by skilled and dedicated youth workers.

John Puttick Associates’ longstanding involvement with OnSide began with a proposed, though never realised, project within its Preston Bus Station refurbishment scheme. The practice went on to design the Legacy Youth Zone, London’s third Youth Zone in West Croydon, completed in 2019.

At Blackburn, the architect assisted Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Blackburn Youth Zone in applying for funding from the Department of Culture,

Media and Sport’s Youth Investment Fund programme, before going on to win the tender to develop the design and implementation of Fusebox.

The first ever electric current in Blackburn came to life in a room inside the robust Victorian power station, which was commissioned under the Blackburn Electric Lighting Order of 1890 and opened in 1895.

The power was used to run mills, light floodlights, and bring the local cinema to life, but despite the building’s importance as an example of industrial heritage and impressively patterned brick exterior, it was never listed by Historic England.

“When we inherited the project, the outside was still pretty much intact and very much as it was originally,” explains Puttick, “It’s architecturally really strong, especially the detailing; the brickwork’s really very tectonic.”

Nevertheless, the site is located inside the Darwen Street Conservation Area, one of five such zones in Blackburn’s town centre, making it an area of special architectural or historic interest.

Recognising the building’s significance, the practice opted to retain the facade with no major changes, only repairing

The disused power station’s richly decorated brick facade was retained



ACCOMMODATING NEW FUNCTIONS

An existing double height space was retained and partially filled with a new build mezzanine designed to accommodate an events space

CONNECTION TO THE PAST

Fusebox is remarkable for being one of the UK's earliest municipally-owned power stations.

Built in the early 1890s on the site of a gas works dating back to 1818, the building was constructed in two stages, the first section along George Street housed generators and within two years it was extended to form the current L shape.

A new, larger engine house was added in 1902, a section of which survives, then in 1921 the power station closed its doors, assuming an administrative role.

The most significant heritage elements of the surviving building are the street facades, which are mostly in their original condition and made of engineering-quality red brick with a regular arrangement of recessed round-arched windows on the ground and first floors.

"The detailing of the brickwork is notable, with the patterns and recesses around window openings giving it a strong tectonic quality and rhythm," says John Puttick at John Puttick Associates. "The building is a link to Blackburn's industrial past and the lives of local people and so forms an important cultural memory in the town centre."

The brickwork was cleaned as part of the project while inside the building, in what has become the main events space, an original overhead travelling crane was restored to provide another physical reminder of the building's past.



and cleaning the brickwork and original windows. The old boarded-up entrance on Pilkington Street was 'liberated,' and glazed to create a light and airy new central entrance – not just a practical improvement, but a symbol of accessibility and inclusion.

The existing building's interior was much less impressive or worth holding on to. "It had been very chopped around, there was a warren of very small rooms which weren't original, it was kind of a mess, and lots of suspended ceilings," says Puttick. These were mostly cleared out to create a visually open and coherent spatial arrangement more akin to the original operational building and well suited to youth activities.

One existing double height space was retained and partially filled with a new build mezzanine designed to accommodate an events space. This connects through at first floor level to the building's

Employment Hub, and an office area.

The ground floor of the building contains a series of creative spaces, including a Makers Space and an Arts Studio.

A major challenge was how to address the varying levels across the site, making it possible to open up the central entrance on Pilkington Street. A new FlexStep system installed inside the entrance takes visitors up to the ground floor foyer below the mezzanine. To connect the Fusebox to the lower level youth centre building meant installing a ramp and stairway along the interior 'L'-shaped wall of the Fusebox. These integrate with new tiered amphitheatre-style seating, complete with phone charging points, facing onto a central recreation area. Behind the seating, the glazing was opened up to allow young people to catch glimpses of activities going on inside and for those inside to see

WONDERFUL
ELECTRIC



activities in the recreation area.

The 'Fusebox' element of the project itself is aimed at an older age cohort among its young occupants, who for example will get to meet potential employers and learn about career options.

"From the work we've done with youth organisations elsewhere, we know that older age group is harder to persuade to engage with a youth centre," says Puttick, "While kids tend to be very happy to go along, as they get older they have other distractions and interests and it becomes more tricky to engage them."

Input from youngsters was therefore considered key to finding a successful solution and through an active co-design process many were invited to help shape the design and function of the space.

The architect's sketches and models were presented to young people and their feedback, including images they generated

using AI, helped direct decision making.

This process led to the creation of the themed 'zones', which also include an Arts and Textiles Centre, a Training Kitchen, a Music and Production Suite, a Health and Wellbeing Space and a dedicated Digital Arts Screen. A 'Gaming Zone' in the building features a space-aged hexagonal doorway lined with neon, as well as pool tables and bespoke gaming tables.

According to Puttick, it was important to avoid an "in your face" patronising type of interior seen in some youth projects, the architects here instead striving for a more mature feel, akin to a shared workspace or a cafe/art gallery.

This was achieved in part through the lighting design, most notably blue neon signage and wiggly white luminaires that snake across ceilings, marking out circulation routes.

"We worked a lot with groups of

FEEDBACK-GENERATED ZONES

Feedback from young – including AI-generated images – helped drive the creation of themed zones including an Arts and Textiles Centre, Training Kitchen, Music and Production Suite, and Health and Wellbeing Space





young people to come up with a bold set of colours, the music room, recording studio and employment hub all have bold colour schemes to give a fresh and forward looking feel,” says Puttick.

Layered history

The designers were keen to respond to the site’s industrial heritage and certain original features have been restored and preserved, most notably a roof-mounted crane and rail system in the double height space, plus the Electricity Works sign on the outside of the building.

The new palette of materials was selected to emphasise the power station’s robust industrial feel. The structure for the new mezzanine is made up of exposed steel columns and I-beams at the perimeter, and metal balustrades with welded steel joints and infill panels of galvanised metal mesh. A large sliding door to the digital maker space is fitted with industrial-style glazing.

The raw, stripped back material palette helped the project meet a relatively tight budget of less than £1,500 per square

metre, as did the focus on reusing as much of the original building as possible. However, certain design compromises were required to keep costs in check.

“The main impact was on the finishes, most obviously on the ground floor we would have loved to do a poured concrete floor but that clearly wasn’t within budget so we went for a vinyl floor instead,” says Puttick.

The building’s rich and layered history is reflected in a series of artworks by Uncultured Creatives, a collaboration between Artist Jamie Holman and curator Alex Zawadzki.

Spread throughout the building and themed on energy, progress and technological transformation, these include a stained glass window in the wall facing onto the recreation area and an AI-generated artwork, created in collaboration with youngsters and craftspeople, to explore how power, technology and culture continue to evolve. Another example of tech innovation is a large digital screen on the ceiling below the mezzanine space

The Gaming Zone features a space-aged hexagonal doorway lined with neon



The stripped-back material palette helped the project meet a relatively tight budget of less than £1000 per square metre

displaying locally-made videos.

Leaving much of the power station in its original form helped minimise the need for new construction thereby reducing embodied carbon. For example, the mezzanine was configured to fit around an existing staircase to avoid its demolition.

The project had no BREEAM target, and the insulation was not upgraded; however a new energy-efficient heating system and low-energy sensor activated lighting were installed. The building will be naturally ventilated in warmer months with some cooling, for example in the events space.

Improvements made to the adjacent Youth Zone building include a reconfigured reception and a new wellbeing room, gaming area, dance studio and gym. Outside, the triangular parcel of land was upgraded with skate friendly curvy concrete landscaping and coloured canopies that shelter people sitting below. A new green wall running along the side of the site adds

to the project's biodiversity.

According to Puttick, the project was straightforward from a planning point of view, mainly because the existing facades were retained. However, the sunken green wall created "some complexity" with the Environment Agency because it runs adjacent to a river.

With many councils in England struggling financially, the outlook for youth focused projects is bleak. A 2024 Local Government Authority survey of council chief executives found that 63% of them were anticipating making cutbacks in services and support for children, young people and families.

Nevertheless, projects like Fusebox ignite a spark of hope, demonstrating how, with limited investment and careful design, disused buildings can be brought back to life to provide young people with dedicated spaces to create, learn, socialise and express themselves. ■

03-05 March
Excel, London

futurebuild
03 - 05 March 2026 | Excel, London

Connecting ambition and action

As the global conversation around climate change intensifies, Futurebuild 2026 is turning shared ambition into tangible action. Returning to London's Excel from 3-5 March 2026, it remains the UK's only built environment event wholly dedicated to driving sustainable construction.

Under the theme 'Connect', the show reflects its role as a platform for purposeful collaboration – uniting people, projects and proven solutions to move the industry from ideas to impact.

"We've long prided ourselves on establishing a business environment that connects people and ideas to create value and long-lasting impact," says Martin Hurn, Futurebuild event director.

"For 2026, we're amplifying that with a renewed focus on the economic and environmental opportunities that come from collective action. Every aspect of the event aims to make those connections more meaningful and effective."

New blueprint for collaboration

The refreshed floorplan is built around enabling interaction – from new networking zones to dedicated feature areas.

Among the most anticipated additions is the Zero Waste area, highlighting the reuse and recycling momentum reshaping the sector. Facilitated by Futurebuild partners including the Circular Economy Task Force, The Engineers Reuse Collective, ACAN!, the Circular Economy Institute, Architects Declare and CIWM, the area will host keynotes and showcase practical examples of closed-loop innovation in action.

Another major development for 2026 is the Local Authority Collaboration Hub, integrated within the National Retrofit Conference. A space for local authority representatives, housing associations, contractors and built environment professionals, it will focus on delivering healthier, more energy efficient homes.

Futurebuild has also partnered with Innovate UK to launch a new 'Meet the Buyer' area, to drive direct engagement between innovators and those shaping procurement decisions.

Knowledge, innovation & real impact

Fresh thinking is shaping Futurebuild's Knowledge Programme. While the two conference stages will continue to be a prominent draw, the Buildings, Energy, Materials and Placemaking stages will see a shake up. Several industry bodies are hosting 'takeovers' to elevate the discussion around the role of innovation, supported by daily 'FutureX' sessions exploring AI, circularity and the digital future of construction and the new Zero Waste programme.

"We always put a lot of effort into bringing the right people together to curate high calibre content that fuels conversations and sparks connections," adds Martin Hurn. "Looking at resilience through the lens of reuse and regeneration, we've got an inspirational line-up coming together with partners such as UKGBC and The Sustainable Development Foundation," he continues.

"As ever, innovation is at the heart of everything but we'll be flipping the script slightly to explore how we can better use existing knowledge and the need for social transformation, rather than solely exploring novel technical solutions."

Complementing the programme, The Big Retrofit Challenge and The Big Innovation Pitch return for 2026, celebrating pioneering approaches to decarbonisation and healthy living.

To register for your ticket, please scan the QR Code.

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From 19th century roofs to 21st century facades

Jonathan Lowy of VM Zinc traces the architectural history of zinc, from its European origins to a modern role in durable, sustainable building envelopes.



In 1811, a roofer in Liège tried something radical; he installed the world's first rolled zinc roof, adapting techniques from lead work to a lighter, more adaptable metal refined by the abbot-chemist Jean-Jacques Dony.

The financier, François-Dominique Mosselman, soon recognised that a material is only as powerful as the ecosystem behind it. He invested in mines, rolling mills and in 1837 helped found a company whose name

echoed the ore itself: La Vieille Montagne, “the Old Mountain.” The new company was able to supply this ‘new’ metal at a much larger scale, therefore allowing far more ambitious projects to be specified in zinc.

Paris, redrawn in zinc

If Liège proved to be the beginning, Paris proved to be the destiny. Under Napoleon III, Baron Haussmann rebuilt

Zinc’s high strength to weight ratio and workability made it the natural answer



the city in the 1850s, changing the city from bottom to top literally in terms of zinc, by imposing large-scale buildings whose roofs featured the famous mansard frames, which were more cost effective than the former steeply pitched tiled roofs, making zinc a huge success.

The mansard became a civic model: break the roof into slopes, crown the boulevards in light. Zinc's high strength to weight ratio and workability made it the natural answer; lead was heavy, copper expensive; in 1862 a decree requiring rainwater recovery on street facing facades mainstreamed zinc gutters and rainwater goods.

A micro-state that powered a material

Supply is a design story, too. After the 1815 Congress of Vienna, the Altenberg (Vieille Montagne) mine found itself inside a geopolitical curiosity: Neutral Moresnet. In the vicinity of Kelmis (50 km to the east of Liège), the site of a large zinc and lead mine, the Netherlands and Prussia did not manage to reach an agreement. After multiple discussions, a special contract called "the borders contract" was signed in 1816. It was decided that the commune of Moresnet would be divided into three parts. The village went to the Netherlands, and the territory corresponding to present-day Neu-Moresnet became part of Prussia. The remaining part, around Kelmis and its zinc mine, was attributed a neutral status. Administered jointly, it became both an engine room and a social laboratory. The company funded a school in 1857, provided medical care, enabled loans for housing; low taxes and decent wages drew skills, stability and, by extension, quality. For a century, this tiny territory fed an outsized architectural impact before neutrality ended in 1919.

A global envelope material

In the middle of the 19th century, zinc roofs started to spread beyond Belgium, France and Germany and an example of this was Liverpool Central Library that was completed in 1879 with an attractive zinc clad dome. After over 130 years of service, the zinc was replaced, and will hopefully last well into the 22nd century.

In the 19th century, architects only had mill finish natural zinc on offer but in 1978 the first pre-weathered zinc was produced and even though zinc has always been extremely durable modern industrial

'Covering Generations' is a fitting phrase for what zinc has always done: it covers towns and cities generation after generation

methods give the metal an even higher performance with this being detailed in BS EN 988. The BRE's Environmental Product Declarations also give a service life of 100 years, and while zinc is 100% recyclable, over 98% is actually recycled in Western Europe. To add to this, pre-weathered zinc is also A1, non-combustible in accordance with EN 13501-1.

How are architects using zinc?

The wide variety of pre-weathered zinc now available, coupled with an extensive range of systems, makes zinc an ideal choice for building envelopes. Evans Vettori designed a jewellery centre for CW Sellors. The project combined a number of materials, including QUARTZ-ZINC standing seam roofing and facades installed by Just Hard Metals. The Urban Agency used the same standing seam panels on the White Water Rafting centre in Dublin. The striking red panels were installed by Copeland Coppersmith. Returning to Natural zinc, The Manser Practice specified this product on this low level ferry terminal, with the standing seam panels being installed by Longworth Hard Metals.

The New Teaching and Workshop Buildings at Oxford Brookes University by ADP combine traditional fully supported systems, such as standing seam roofing with rainscreen facades, including perforated screens, with all of the systems being in Pigmento green zinc.

The next chapter

'Covering Generations' is a fitting phrase for what zinc has always done: it covers towns and cities generation after generation, and it also spans generations of craft, as we have seen from the zinc roofers of Paris receiving UNESCO world heritage status. From a Liège church roof to Parisian boulevards and onto today's rainscreen facades, the material's promise remains the same: make the building's envelope durable and attractive.

Jonathan Lowy is operational marketing manager at VM Zinc

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The case for designing in structural timber

Andrew Orriss of the Structural Timber Association (STA) takes a look at the variety of factors behind a 'clear direction of travel' towards designing with timber.



Unlike other materials, timber can sequester carbon during its growth

Within the context of net zero, decarbonising building stock has become an imperative, both in the UK and globally. Around the world, 40% of carbon emissions are currently created through the built environment – an alarming figure that urgently needs to be addressed.

Thankfully, the construction industry is adapting. With ESG having become a leading priority, architects are now expected to deliver sustainable project

designs, requiring a more holistic approach than simply implementing energy efficient technologies. Comprehensive design strategies must now consider the full environmental impact of the solutions and materials used at all stages of the construction process.

Here, timber has emerged as a key material owing to its ability to dramatically reduce the embodied carbon associated with projects. In simple terms, that is the greenhouse gas emissions associated with



River Tay Boathouse in Scotland

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the lifecycle of buildings, from extraction to end of life. Therefore, embodied carbon includes the carbon generated during material production, transportation and construction, as well as maintenance and demolition.

At present, embodied carbon within buildings accounts for 11% of all carbon emissions globally. Here lies the value in using timber as, crucially, it has the potential to reduce embodied emissions in a single building by as much as 60%.

Unlike other materials, timber can sequester carbon during its growth, essentially acting as a carbon sink. According to the UK Climate Change Committee (CCC), carbon storage is approximately 50% higher in timber framed homes than in masonry homes, and can be up to 400% higher for larger buildings that use engineered timber products such as Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT) instead of concrete.

Quality & programme benefits

What's more, structural timber offers a host of quality and programme benefits in addition to its environmental performance. For example, engineered timber solutions such as CLT and glulam are readily used in large-scale structures owing to their strength, stability, design flexibility and building efficiency.

Meanwhile, in the housebuilding sector, solutions such as timber frame and SIPs offer significant benefits when it comes to reducing construction timescales. Timber-framed homes can now be built in as little as 15 weeks, significantly quicker than the 26 to 30 weeks typically required for masonry or concrete based projects.

Those shorter timeframes are crucial in a sector where efficiency is of paramount importance, helping to reduce project risks and costs. Timber-framed structures also become weathertight in typically 10 to 12 days, meaning internal works can start and finish earlier.

Additionally, with the growth of offsite manufacturing, many key components of timber frame structures can be produced in closely controlled factory environments, allowing for precision engineering and better overall quality control. What's more, the use of sustainably sourced (and certified) timber will help to address deforestation, while also helping constructions to secure key certifications relating to excellence in sustainability used

across the industry, such as BREEAM, LEED or WELL.

Upskilling & best practices

Clearly, timber is commercially favourable and sustainable. However, despite these clear advantages, several steps need to be taken to aid timber's widespread adoption.

With many industry professionals traditionally using concrete and steel, timber can't simply be swapped in as a replacement without some adjustments. Indeed, its use requires new design related considerations, making informed and proactive planning essential.

Architects keen to use timber will need to work closely with system suppliers and clients throughout projects, ensuring that design decisions and applications support best practices when it comes to timber – bearing in mind that early engagement with suppliers will deliver the best results. As with any building typology, aspects such as durability, acoustic performance and fire resistance will need to be considered, while architects should also be adopting design for manufacture and assembly principles, to help influence both sustainability outcomes and overall commercial performance.

Promisingly, the UK Government is emphasising this as a priority. In its Timber in Construction (TiC) Roadmap, updated in 2025, a spotlight has been shone on the importance of improving competencies across the supply chain, with a focus on seven priority areas, one of which is a focus on skills and training, and includes attracting new talent into timber related careers, reskilling existing industry professionals, and establishing forums for industry wide knowledge sharing.

For many architects, moving to timber will require concerted efforts, demanding new thinking, designs, and collaboration. However, those that are proactive in doing so will be well placed to spearhead the shift to low-carbon, cost effective architecture that will only continue to become a more pressing priority in the years ahead.

Uptake is likely set to increase. Timber's appeal is compelling – from sustainability to commercial viability, resilience and aesthetic appeal. For architects at the forefront of the UK's built environment, the material presents not just an interesting option, but a clear direction of travel.

Andrew Orriss is CEO of the Structural Timber Association (STA)

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Community-driven solution redefines one of London's most prestigious shopping streets

Sloane Street, in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC), is a world-renowned shopping destination lined with flagship stores, luxury hotels, and Georgian architecture. Its regeneration, led by Cadogan in partnership with RBKC, aimed to reaffirm the street's prestige while enhancing residents' quality of life.

As a long-term supplier to RBKC, Urbis Schröder was commissioned by lighting design consultancy LAPD to deliver a bespoke

lighting scheme for the 1km public realm. Collaboration with The Kensington Society ensured the design reflected community values and the street's distinctive heritage.

CARLTON lanterns were selected for their timeless heritage style – large units illuminate the roadway while smaller, lower-mounted versions provide warm, low-glare light for pedestrians. Custom 2700K LED sources from Pudsey Diamond enhance safety, accessibility, and comfort.

Inspired by Holy Trinity Church and its Arts and Crafts heritage, bespoke metalwork was created with John McAslan Architects, Bethan Griffiths (Topp & Co.), and LAPD. Cast finials, brackets, and base details give each column a unique, handcrafted character.

Energy-efficient LEDs reduce consumption and light spill, supporting RBKC's greening strategy and promoting biodiversity. Delivered by FM Conway on behalf of Cadogan and RBKC, the scheme embodies collaboration, placemaking, and sustainability – reinforcing



Sloane Street's identity as a luxury destination and a vibrant community.

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Keystone Group 2025 Social Value Report



The Keystone Group, manufacturers of construction solutions, has launched its 2025 Social Value Report, highlighting the positive impact the Group continues to make across communities, education,

skills and charitable initiatives. The report outlines the company's commitment to going beyond business, and the way it embeds social value into its culture and operations, ensuring its impact extends far beyond the products it manufactures. View the report here: keystonegroup.co.uk/keystone-group-launches-social-value-report

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Private Housing Project of the Year



The River Tay Boathouse in Scotland, designed by architects Barboza Blanco and crafted by Carpenter Oak, has won Private Housing Project of the Year at the 2025 Structural Timber Awards. The project showcases the beauty and performance of timber construction, combining sustainably sourced Douglas fir and

larch with traditional pegged mortice and tenon joinery. Built within the masonry shell of a historic riverside boathouse, it highlights how contemporary timber craftsmanship can enhance both structure and setting – a celebration of design, material and collaboration.

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Modular Highline 275 Fan Coil range wins



Diffusion is celebrating success at the HVR Awards 2025 after its New Modular Highline 275 Fan Coil Range won the 'Air Conditioning Product of the Year' category. Expanding Diffusion's award-winning modular range of fan coil units, the Modular Highline 275 offers a higher-capacity

option with airflows up to 514 l/s. This ensures that even large-scale spaces can benefit from the range's modular design. With compact dimensions and advanced components delivering low sound levels, reduced energy consumption, and optimal performance, the Modular Highline 275 also offers significant sustainability benefits.

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Bringing commercial lighting to book



Knightsbridge has curated its impressive commercial lighting ranges into a single collection that meets the needs of developers, contractors and specifiers alike. The new dedicated commercial lighting catalogue is a powerful resource for the trade, consolidating

the brand commercial solutions into one expert guide. The catalogue is a response to increasing demand for high-performance lighting across commercial, industrial, and retail settings. The catalogue showcases Knightsbridge's extensive product portfolio – with options designed to meet the demands of both indoor and outdoor environments.

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fermacell® fibre gypsum boards: Accelerating timelines without compromise



In the fast-paced world of construction, time is often the most valuable resource. Delays can cascade through a project, impacting budgets, client satisfaction, and downstream trades. That's why innovative materials like fermacell® fibre gypsum boards are transforming how architects approach internal wall construction, offering a smarter, faster alternative to traditional blockwork and plasterboard systems without sacrificing strength or performance.

One of the most compelling advantages of fermacell® fibre gypsum boards are their installation flexibility. Unlike blockwork, which typically requires the building envelope to be sealed before internal walls can be constructed, fermacell® fibre gypsum boards can be installed before the envelope is closed. This shift in sequencing has a profound impact on programme time. By enabling earlier commencement of internal works, fermacell® helps compress the overall schedule, allowing multiple trades to work in parallel and reducing idle time on site.

Speed is another critical factor. fermacell® fibre gypsum boards are quicker to install than blockwork, thanks to its dry construction method and ease of handling. There's no need for wet trades, curing times, or complex logistics around mortar and mixing. Installers can move swiftly, and the

boards can be cut and fixed with standard tools, streamlining the process even further. For architects working on tight deadlines or fast-track projects, this speed translates directly into time saved and milestones met. When compared with traditional plasterboard systems its reduction in layers including pattress and small component lists offer a time reduction.

Yet speed alone isn't enough – performance matters. fermacell® fibre gypsum boards deliver the strength and durability of blockwork, making them suitable for high-impact areas, crowd loading applications and demanding environments. Its dense composition provides excellent acoustic insulation, fire resistance, and robustness, meeting the rigorous standards architects expect from traditional masonry. This means you don't have to compromise on quality to gain time.

Another often-overlooked benefit is the reduction in enabling works. Blockwork typically requires foundations, lintels, and other structural supports, adding complexity and cost. fermacell® fibre gypsum boards, by contrast, offer a lightweight system that can be installed without these additional elements. This not only simplifies design and coordination but also reduces material usage and site disruption, contributing to a more sustainable and efficient build.

From a design perspective, fermacell® fibre gypsum boards offer versatility. They support direct finishes such as paint, tiles, or wallpaper, and can be used in curved or complex layouts that would be challenging with blockwork. This opens up creative possibilities while maintaining practical advantages.

In summary, fermacell® fibre gypsum boards are more than just a building material, they are a strategic tool for architects looking to accelerate project delivery without compromising on performance or design integrity. By enabling earlier installation, reducing enabling works, and offering the strength of blockwork with the speed of drywall, fermacell® helps architects stay ahead of schedule and deliver smarter, more efficient buildings.

For practices focused on innovation, sustainability, and time-sensitive delivery, fermacell® fibre gypsum is a material worth specifying. It's not just about building faster – it's about building better.



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Industry perspectives on the evolving landscape of residential building design

We are witnessing a number of major trends to reshape building design in the residential sector driven by a growing urgency to meet sustainability targets, the need to adapt to climate change and advances in technology

Cedral surveyed 250 architects, building specifiers and construction professionals who are involved in the materials sourcing process to gain deeper insights into industry perspectives on challenges and opportunities in key areas including new builds, retrofitting, modular construction, climate-conscious design and sustainability.

Key findings from the research

1. The increasing focus on sustainability and climate resilience has brought about a shift towards eco-friendly materials, while energy efficiency and the need to withstand extreme weather conditions have become key design priorities.
2. Climate change is shaping design decisions, affecting both building function and aesthetics.
3. New builds continue to represent the largest proportion of projects, driven by demand for housing, energy efficiency and sustainability.
4. Retrofitting and adaptive reuse are on the increase, particularly when it comes to increasing property value and achieving net zero targets.
5. Modular construction is gaining traction as a cost-effective construction method for residential building that allows for higher quality control while

achieving faster delivery times and reduced waste.

6. Sustainability challenges persist, with high costs and lack of clear guidance creating barriers.

New builds continue to dominate

New builds are set to remain a key focus area for residential design and construction, with three in five (60%) survey respondents expecting to see an increase in these types of projects over the next two years.

The main driving forces behind this trend

1. Housing demand: With the UK government estimating that 300,000 new homes will be needed annually to meet the current demand for housing, over three quarters (77%) of architects and building specifiers surveyed expect to see an increase in the number of new build projects in the next two years. 26% expect to work on the same amount of new build projects in the next two years and only 10% anticipate that they will work on fewer new build projects in that time.
2. Energy efficiency: Half (50%) of survey respondents expect to see an increase in new build projects because they are deemed more energy efficient.
3. Sustainability: Almost half (47%) of survey respondents expect to see an increase in new build projects in the next two years because they are deemed sustainable.

Could refurb and retrofits hold the key to future sustainable building?

Three in 10 (30%) survey respondents have noticed a heightened focus on retrofitting in the past five years and half (50%) of those we surveyed expect to see an increase in refurbishment and retrofit projects in the next two years.

The main reasons include

1. Boosting property value: Half (50%) of survey respondents say they expect to see an increase in these types of projects because they can increase the value of a building.
2. Sustainability: Just over two in five (41%) survey respondents say the number of these types of projects will increase because they are deemed more sustainable. A third (33%) expect to see more retrofit and refurb projects because of their importance for meeting net zero targets.
3. Rise in office-to-residential developments: With many office spaces now sitting vacant, these spaces now represent a major opportunity when it comes to tackling the UK's housing shortage. Two in five (40%) respondents expect to see an increase in the number of refurb and retrofit projects due to the rise in office-to-residential developments.

Additionally, three in 10 (31%) respondents say they expect to work on more refurb and retrofit projects because of the government's commitments to remediate non-conforming cladding on high rise residential buildings.

Modular construction will grow in importance

The industry is embracing modular construction as a means of delivering high-quality, efficient and environmentally responsible buildings.

Not only do half (50%) of survey respondents report an increased focus on modular projects in the past five years, but almost half (49%) expect this momentum to continue in the next five years. Meanwhile, almost four in five (78%) respondents agree that working with modular construction will become more important in the next one to two years, citing cost savings (57%)





and efficiency (51%) as advantages. 41% also see greater quality as an advantage, 39% cite a reduction in the environmental impact and 37% see a benefit of design flexibility.

Climate change is having a significant impact on building exterior design and specification

Almost all (96%) respondents say climate change is affecting facade design and specification choices in one or more ways. 59% of respondents say climate change is affecting the choice of materials chosen. 56% say there is greater importance placed on insulation and 41% say there is greater use of surrounding planting. Over a third (35%) say there is greater consideration of the building's orientation.

While most building materials are designed to withstand some degree of expansion and contraction, excessive heat can push these materials beyond their limit. The impact on the building's fabric can also adversely affect the quality of the indoor environment and the wellbeing of the occupants. With more intense sunshine, higher temperatures and increased radiation, the UK renovation and homebuilding sector is having to re-evaluate material choices as well as design features to ensure greater resilience.

Over seven in 10 (72%) respondents agree that climate change has a significant influence on building design from an aesthetic perspective. Respondents are most likely to say that the main facade design trend

they expect to see in the next three years is exterior living walls. Smart facades (39%), minimalism (32%) and a return to traditional materials such as brick or stone (32%) are also expected to prove popular.

More needs to be done to achieve long-term sustainability

Discussions around sustainability, futureproofing and a fabric first approach have become increasingly prominent for housebuilding. One of the trends we are seeing for the exterior is more natural products such as fibre cement cladding. A strong, versatile and sustainable material containing cement and fibres, it uses fewer raw materials and less energy in its manufacture and produces less waste than some traditional building materials.

However, almost all (97%) survey respondents report that they are experiencing one or more challenges when it comes to innovating new ways to improve the sustainability of building projects.

The obstacles that the architects and building specifiers are most likely to be facing are caused by economic factors outside of their control such as the cost of materials (65%) and the cost of construction (62%). Challenges which the industry has more control over include:

- A lack of standardisation or guidance on sustainable building practices (35%)
- A lack of training and awareness of sustainable design principles (34%)

- A lack of operative training and awareness of sustainable building practices (29%)

While many architects, developers, contractors and manufacturers involved in residential construction have been proactive in making modifications to reduce carbon emissions, there is much more to do. 48% of architects admitted that they expect sustainability measures they are introducing on current new builds to be out of date within 15 years. Collaboration across the industry will be essential to overcome these barriers and create buildings that stand the test of time.

Visit the website to read the full Cedral report entitled 'Building the Future' which examines the construction industry's attitudes towards emerging design trends, sustainability and meeting the UK's chronic housing needs.

Cedral also carried out a survey of UK homeowners with the findings published in a report, 'Fit for Purpose'. The research suggest that homeowners are increasingly focused on long-term sustainability and resilience and are more interested in having a timeless exterior than following design trends. Visit the website for the results of the study.

Lisa Grosse is brand manager at Cedral

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Navigating flat roof design standards with Bauder's specification support for architects

Comprehensive, free-of-charge flat roof specification support from Bauder helps architects mitigate the challenges of technical calculations, regulation compliance, and detail design. And, with 24 Bauder systems covered by 16 CCPI (Code for Construction Product Information) marks, architects can trust that the information used to specify a Bauder solution is “clear, accurate, up to date, accessible, and unambiguous.”

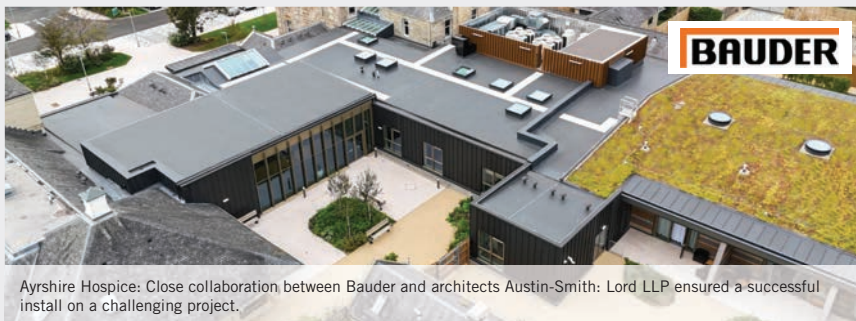
Flat roofs are often perceived as simple. In practice, they present a range of design and compliance challenges. For architects, ensuring performance, buildability, and alignment with regulations often requires significant technical input across multiple disciplines. Bauder's in-house technical team works closely with architects to simplify this process and deliver single-point support that saves time, reduces design risk, and streamlines project delivery.

Approved Document A: Structural and load considerations

Bauder provides weight load calculations to ensure that proposed roof systems do not exceed the structural capacity of the building. These calculations align with BS EN 1991-1-1, supporting compliance with Approved Document A of the Building Regulations. This is a consideration particularly with blue roofs, green roofs, and roofs with heavy insulation build-ups, for which these calculations can help inform architects' material selection. Additionally, under Approved Document A, accurate wind load design is delivered in line with BS EN 1991-1-4 and, ensuring resistance to wind uplift – essential for tall buildings or exposed sites.

Approved Document L: Thermal performance and energy compliance

Another component of Bauder's support is resolving U-values and thermal bridging. Calculated in accordance with BS EN ISO 6946 and BR 443, they ensure the thermal performance of the roof build-up meets the standards of Approved Document L. Integrating these assessments early in the design process helps architects meet energy targets efficiently and avoid potential redesigns, which can be costly both in terms of time and money.



Ayrshire Hospice: Close collaboration between Bauder and architects Austin-Smith: Lord LLP ensured a successful install on a challenging project.

Approved Document H: Drainage and tapered insulation schemes

For drainage outlets, Bauder adheres to BS EN 12056-3 and Approved Document H, ensuring compliant roof drainage layouts that reduce the risk of standing water and long-term membrane damage.

Bauder's tapered insulation schemes provide drainage and thermal performance where structural falls are not feasible. From an architectural standpoint, they save space and reduce structural complexity, while ensuring regulatory compliance with BS 6229:2018, Approved Document H (Drainage), and Approved Document L (Conservation of Energy).

Approved Document E: Acoustic performance

Depending on the system specified, Bauder offers detailed assessments of acoustic performance, with roof build-ups tested to BS EN ISO 10140-2:2021 and designed to meet the requirements of Approved Document E. This is especially important in buildings such as schools and hospitals, where noise transfer can significantly impact educational attainment and health outcomes.

Approved Document C: Moisture control

For condensation risk analysis, Bauder uses modelling based on BS EN ISO 13788 (2012), helping architects prevent interstitial condensation and meet the moisture management expectations set out in BS 5250 and Approved Document C. In addition, architects can be confident that meeting the requirements of BS 6229:2018 supports compliance with Approved Document C for a

jointed system that is impervious to moisture and offers resistance to weather.

National Standards for SuDS Compliance: Blue roofs

In response to increasing rainfall intensity and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) requirements, Bauder provides H-max capacity calculations and discharge reports for blue roofs designed to attenuate a 1:100-year storm event. These reports help architects meet both planning conditions and environmental targets.

Ayrshire Hospice project: Collaboration in action

A Scottish charity required extensions to its 201-year-old Category 'B' listed premises. Close collaboration during a challenging project between Bauder and architects Austin-Smith: Lord LLP ensured flat-roof upgrades met regulations while respecting the site's heritage and adding a modern touch to the rear curtilage. Precision in the fully compliant, multi-layer green roof design is backed by 20 years of assured design, warranty, and performance. The project's success enables the charity to expand its care across Ayrshire and Arran communities.

Bauder's specification support provides architects with a single, reliable contact for flat roof design, grounded in current standards and regulations and ensuring the specified flat roof systems are compliant and aligned with the project's design intent.

For more information on Bauder's specification support for architects, please get in touch.

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RENOLIT ALKORPLAN's analysis supports Stihl



RENOLIT ALKORPLAN roofing products proudly announces the successful completion of a significant project at Stihl's logistic hub for the Iberic peninsula, situated in Torres de la Alameda, Madrid, Spain. This initiative involved the installation of photovoltaic panels on 6,200 m² of existing RENOLIT ALKORPLAN Bright membrane, leveraging the innovative RENOLIT ALKORPLAN Solar Profile. Beyond the efficiency provided by the product itself, this project notably underscored the crucial role of comprehensive technical service prior to installation.

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A new version of EJOT's Anchor Fix software enables easier development of anchoring designs and specifications for heavy-duty and safety-critical applications. Free to download from the EJOT website, Anchor Fix 2025 allows different fastening options in the EJOT through-bolt, resin anchoring and LIEBIG heavy-duty anchor ranges to be compared with ease, saving time and cost. Increased flexibility comes with new functionality so standard and bespoke fastening options for different applications can be compared accurately, without being constrained by design code EN 1992-4.

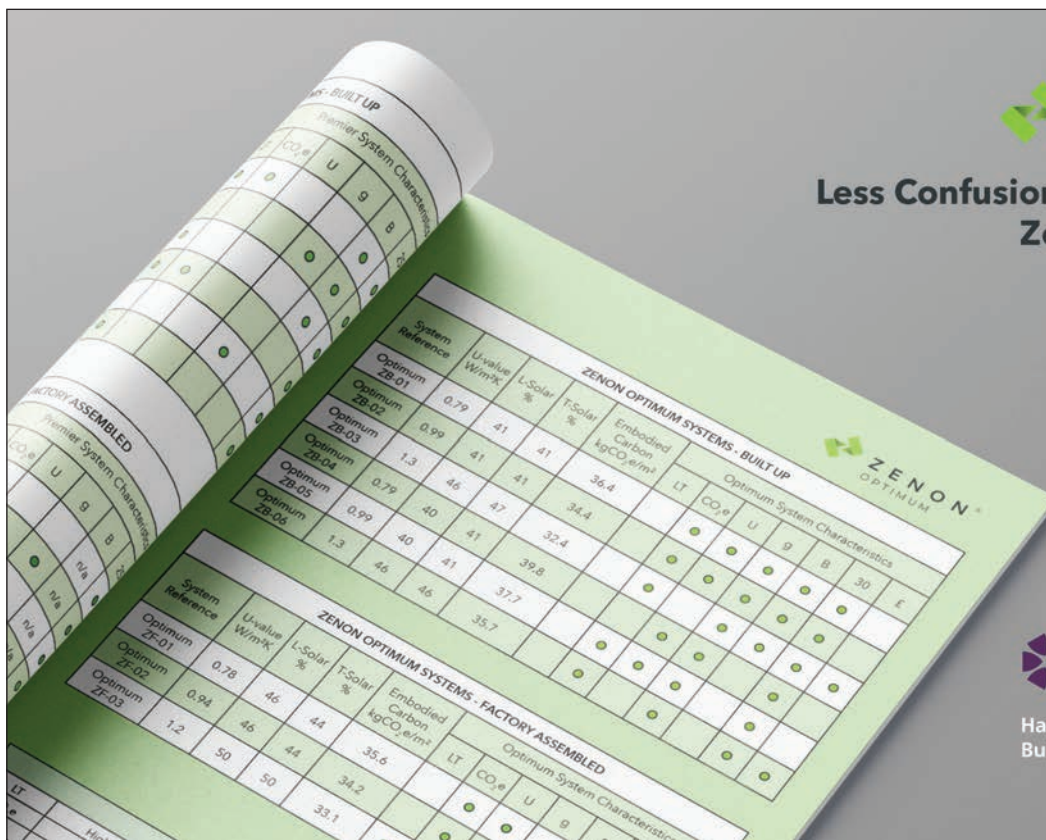
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Automatic doors have become the standard for modern buildings, with key access points often being integral to the smooth functioning of the premises. TORMAX UK provides nationwide coverage through its team of service engineers, offering 24-hour emergency callouts alongside scheduled maintenance and repairs for almost any automatic door system. A TORMAX Planned Maintenance Contract (PMC) allows for regularly scheduled servicing, ensuring the entrance always complies with current health and safety standards and maintains optimal performance. "Today's automatic door systems are more advanced than ever," says Simon Roberts, MD for TORMAX UK. "Over time, dirt, leaves, and other debris – or even water infiltration during heavy rain – can impact the system's performance or lead to complete failure. Regular, comprehensive servicing helps detect potential issues early, preventing long-term damage and keeping key components functioning at their best. "Our goal is always to repair rather than replace, reducing costs and disruption. With every engineer carrying a comprehensive range of spare parts, we can often complete repairs on the first visit."

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ARBOSHIELD Pro® range of self-adhesive and pasted Class A and B membrane systems

CARLISLE®, the waterproofing and building envelope specialist, has extended the company's market-leading ARBOSHIELD Pro® fire-rated facade systems range with the launch of two new pasted fire-resistant membrane systems. The new products mean that specifiers can now choose both the fire-rating and installation method best-suited to their project from CARLISLE®'s independently tested EN 13501-1 certified range.

The launch of the ARBOSHIELD® Pro Class A2 Pasted Facade System (ARPS) and ARBOSHIELD Po® BRPS Class B Pasted Facade System means that both A2-s1,d0 and B-s1,d0 reaction to fire classifications are available from CARLISLE® in a choice of self-adhesive or pasted solutions, all providing high performance, durability and buildability.

ARBOSHIELD® Pro ARPS is the non-combustible, pasted EPDM alternative seal and interface sealing membrane system for windows and structural openings that



delivers A2-s1, d0 fire classification for higher risk buildings.

ARBOSHIELD Pro® BRPS is CARLISLE®'s Class B s1,d0 rated pasted facade membrane system, which has been fully tested and certified as Class W1 rated. While many Class B-rated pasted facade membrane systems on

the UK market carry only a Class B s3, d0 rating, ARBOSHIELD Pro® BRPS has an industry-leading 's1' certification for risk of smoke in the event of a fire, which means it is more effective at limiting smoke.

Both new additions to the range are designed to seal window and structural openings and provide a high-performance interface sealing membrane. Each has been rigorously tested as a complete system, with both membrane and adhesive designed to work seamlessly together and certified as a cohesive system.

Across the full self-adhesive and pasted range, the membrane systems have been developed to ensure reliable performance and optimal compatibility with various surfaces, delivering a robust barrier against water ingress and air leakage, which supports long-term structural integrity, energy efficiency, fire safety, and compliance.

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Wraptite® membrane plays key role in Passivhaus leisure centre

St Sidwell's Point, in the heart of Exeter city centre, is the world's first Passivhaus-certified, multi-zoned leisure centre. The £44 million, world-leading project includes the A. Proctor Group's Wraptite® external air barrier as part of the highly efficient external wall construction.

The building was designed by Space & Place Architects, alongside Passive House designers Gale & Snowden. On site, it was delivered by main contractor Keir.

As well as Passivhaus certification, St Sidwell's Point was designed and constructed to Building Biology IBN best practice in Healthy Building Design, using data from the University of Exeter Climate Scientists to provide resilience against predicted climate change to 2080.

Applying the Passivhaus standard to a complex multi-zone building

Leisure centres are complex buildings with different internal environmental conditions

to accommodate. Carefully managing the various requirements – heating for swimming pools, cooling for fitness studios, and a host of other spaces in between – is vital to the overall energy performance strategy.

The starting point is the building fabric performance. For St Sidwell's Point, primary considerations for the specified facade systems were high levels of thermal insulation, minimal thermal bridging, and low levels of unplanned air movement.

The building featured three main types of external wall build-up: steel frame construction, blockwork, and cross-laminated timber (CLT). Common to all three was the placement of the insulation and air barrier to the outside of the structure, contributing to the target U-value of 0.14 W/m²K.

Using Wraptite to achieve a high standard of airtightness

Wraptite is a self-adhered membrane, which is both airtight and vapour permeable



membrane. Positioning it externally moves the airtightness barrier away from the internal services zone, simplifying detailing and reducing the number of penetrations.

It is also a Passivhaus-certified component, reinforcing its credentials as a high-quality product that can help projects to meet the standard. To support its use, the A. Proctor Group provided a Wraptite toolbox talk on site, and conducted practical training using mock-up panels to demonstrate best practice installation.

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The business case for daylight

Paul Smith of the Rooflight Association gives insights from a white paper showing how rooflights optimise daylight in large commercial buildings, to boost wellbeing, energy efficiency, and asset value, and offers some design strategies.

The Rooflight Association commissioned a white paper to provide some evidence for what many already know – daylighting matters. And rooflights are the most effective way to bring natural light into buildings, especially large-span industrial and commercial buildings; making rooflights essential.

The timing of this study is crucial, because without research and strong data, daylighting and rooflights are in danger of being sidelined, as decision makers favour photovoltaic systems to save energy and reduce carbon. As this white paper proves, combining their collective benefits ensures the most favourable outcome for the building's performance and the people working within it. As the voice of the UK's rooflight industry, it is our duty to spread the word and ensure that architects, building designers and decision makers are aware of this.

Why it's important

The white paper provides architects with a deeper understanding of the benefits of natural light and the effectiveness of rooflights in buildings. This knowledge will help optimise daylighting design solutions, considering factors such as health and wellbeing and energy usage, which will lead to better buildings, increased client satisfaction and happier and healthier building occupants.

What's inside?

The association appointed esteemed Emeritus Professor John Mardaljevic of Loughborough University to research and write the paper, with the support of our technical committee. This approach has produced an authoritative yet accessible paper that's easy to understand and digest.

The executive summary highlights the key takeaways, while the paper explores the health and wellbeing benefits of daylighting and the commercial and environmental



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advantages, for example electric light consumption, asset value, and use of space. Energy savings are demonstrated in a comprehensive case study using a 3D model, while design guidance will be of particular interest to architects.

Enhanced understanding of the benefits

The white paper delves into the numerous advantages of natural light beyond just illumination; it gives five of the key benefits of daylighting and rooflights in commercial and industrial building design:

- Occupants will be connected to the outside and the natural dynamic changes of daylight inside the building. This is essential to promote a healthy 24-hour circadian rhythm (internal body clock).
- Daylighting has been shown to enhance alertness and the concentration of occupants.



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The right layout is also critical to maximise the daylight potential within the building

- Spaces with good daylight are associated with improved staff retention and reduced absenteeism.
- Exposure to sufficient levels of daylight is believed to support the long-term health and wellbeing of occupants.
- Good daylighting in buildings has been shown to increase asset value and space utilisation.

The most important commercial and environmental benefit is demonstrated in the case study, Daylight Potential and Energy Saving, which uses a 3D model based on a typical roof lit building.

The data reveal that a typical roof lit building has considerable potential to reduce electric lighting energy consumption by using daylight effectively. The study recommends electric lighting be dimmed, or even switched off entirely, in response to available daylight to realise significant savings.

Effective daylighting

Insights from the white paper can be used to inform building design. The study explains why the potential for the effective exploitation of daylight in buildings with rooflights is much greater than in buildings

with vertical glazing. It considers the spread of light, how much sky 'we can see,' and occupant visual comfort.

Sections three and four look at daylight characterisation, availability and prediction, including the daylight factor and climate based daylight modelling, and lighting level recommendations. The latter compares artificial lighting illuminance levels with the likely occurrence of various daylight levels via a rooflight system and explains why "it is vital to ensure at the design stage that the rooflights will deliver the desired provision of natural illumination."

To aid modern building design, the 'new' daylight standards – the European CEN Standard for Daylight in Buildings (EN 17037) and the WELL Building Standard are also explained in the document.

Essential element in building design

For large-span buildings, daylighting performance is directly related to the proportion of roof area assigned to rooflights. The white paper advises: "For non-residential industrial/commercial building types, this [is] typically 10-20% of the roof area."

The right layout is also critical to maximise the daylight potential within the building. The most effective layout balances internal requirements, like boosting natural light levels in deep-plan spaces, with practical considerations, externally, such as other utilities and photovoltaic panels on the roof.

Sometimes, these decisions are left to the roofing contractor or metal roofing supplier, but this is often too late. Early engagement is key to an effective rooflight installation. Instead, work with rooflight manufacturers or suppliers in the early planning stages to facilitate the design. They will likely ask for the project goals and then offer a solution to make the most efficient building possible. For ease, many of our members have products listed on NBS Source, or similar, and also offer CPDs.

To conclude, daylighting performance is largely determined by the decisions made at the early design stage and so, we believe architects must consider daylighting to be an essential element in building design if we are to create healthier, better, more efficient buildings.

Paul Smith is chair of The Rooflight Association

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Pyroguard launches game changing fire-rated balustrade glass range



Pyroguard, the world's leading independent provider of fire safety glass, has developed a thinner, lighter glass specifically for balustrades that achieves A2 fire-rated performance and contains less encapsulated CO₂.

In partnership with Q-railing, a specialist in balustrade systems, the product has been successfully tested and is the first approved balustrade system of its kind to reach the market.

The new Pyroguard Balustrades Evo range has been introduced to meet the growing demand for cost-effective, environmentally responsible glazed balustrade products - without compromising performance or aesthetic appeal. Suitable for both new commercial installations or retrofit projects, the range offers a competitively priced alternative to aluminium railing style solutions.

Pyroguard Balustrades Evo reduces the interlayer thickness from 3 mm to 1.5 mm, matching overall glass thicknesses of standard laminate equivalents - while delivering superior line load capabilities.

The range includes streamlined options such as 13.5 mm, 17.5 mm, 21.5 mm and 25.5 mm for 1.5 kN/m line loads - with a weight saving of up to 6%.

The new range also offers a light transmission improvement compared to the existing Pyroguard Balustrades range and an embodied carbon improvement of up to 7.5%. Existing Pyroguard Balustrades glass thicknesses will continue to be available.

Andy Lake, Pyroguard's sales director for UK & Ireland, said: "Our new balustrade glazing options are a game-changing innovation. We developed the range to meet market demand for A2 fire-rated glazing panels at standard laminated glass thicknesses to deliver aesthetically pleasing balustrades at a competitive price."

He added: "The new range means balustrade manufacturers do not have to change their existing systems, making design and installation much easier, while also allowing them to use existing stock materials. Ultimately, our thinner, lighter balustrade glass delivers on cost, performance

and sustainability."

Darryl Holloway, architectural sales manager, Q-railing explains: "Over the past four years, we have supplied over 5,000 linear metres of fire-rated balconies for high-rise residential projects over 11 m, in conjunction with Pyroguard. Pyroguard Balustrades Evo is an extension of our collaboration with the company to bring to market a fire-rated glass balustrade system which is a more commercially viable option for specifiers."

By utilising conventional laminated glass thicknesses, Pyroguard's Balustrades Evo range not only helps systems meet a wider range of budget expectations but also enhances environmental credentials by optimising the glass manufacturing process.

With its A2 fire classification, Pyroguard Balustrades Evo complies with the latest industry standards for fire safety on balconies.

For more information about Pyroguard Balustrades Evo please visit the website.

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MULTI-RIDGE

Shown in Terracotta



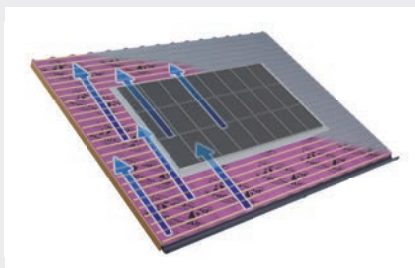
New guidance helps housebuilders combine in-line solar PV and air permeable underlays

New guidance from Proctor Group means housebuilders can now use integrated (or in-line) solar PV together with Proctor Air®, confident that they are meeting all relevant technical requirements – including the NHBC's 2024 Technical Standards, with an alternative BBA approved solution which negates the requirement for double battening.

Backed by leading moisture experts in the UK and Europe, the guidance is also reflected in an update to Proctor Air's BBA certificate.

That means designers and specifiers can follow the guidance in the knowledge that it has been assessed by an independent third party.

As an air permeable, low resistance (APLR) membrane, Proctor Air reduces the risk of issues occurring in roof spaces due to poorly installed vapour control layers or ventilation. And because it provides a more uniform flow of air than standard ventilation solutions, it means the roof requires no other



ventilation measures.

Proctor Air has proved a popular solution since its launch. However, an update to the NHBC Technical Standards created confusion around the use of in-line solar PV with APLR membranes. Housebuilders and developers have therefore been reluctant to specify the two together, despite wanting to use APLR products.

With rooftop solar expected to be made compulsory on new-build housing, the adoption of PV panels will only intensify

as specifications adapt to the lower carbon emissions required by the Future Homes Standard. And as those same homes become even better insulated and more airtight, they will rely on the performance of air permeable membranes to help reduce condensation risk in loft spaces.

To overcome the confusion, Proctor Group undertook research to investigate the issue, engaging Glenfeulan Consulting to undertake modelling using RoofCond software. The renowned Fraunhofer Institute then validated the research findings and agreed with the conclusions.

Equipped with a more thorough understanding of air and moisture movement through pitched roof coverings, Proctor Group has developed a recommendation for pitched roof specifications featuring in-line solar PV and Proctor Air.

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Reference: Crystals Peaks Shopping Centre, Sheffield

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Shaping the future

The Insulation Manufacturers Association (IMA) explains how architects can employ high performance PIR insulation as the key to design homes that are not only low carbon and climate resilient, but which are of high quality.

The UK housing stock accounts for 15% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions due largely to heating with oil and gas. Specifying thermally insulated building envelopes can play a crucial role in reducing this impact across the evolving housing delivery landscape which includes community-led schemes, housing associations, self-build, and joint ventures.

In each case, employing design expertise can enhance the delivery and long-term performance of new homes. By embracing 'fabric first' principles, a well insulated building envelope achieves high performance, low maintenance and reduced energy consumption and could help protect households from future energy price volatility.

Understanding U-values

Reducing heat loss starts with achieving lower U-values throughout the building envelope. Lower U-values in walls, floors and roofs reduce heat loss, resulting in enhanced thermal performance, which in turn will help to deliver the standards required. PIR and PUR insulation products are incredibly versatile as well as effective, and are available in a range of forms including boards and blocks, cavity injected, composite panels as well as a spray and panel insulation.

With the ability to achieve lambda values as low as 0.021 W/mK, PIR can achieve the required insulation performance with less thickness than other commonly used insulation materials. Its exceptional insulating properties, as well as high strength and light weight mean it is used widely across residential, commercial and refurbishment projects.

Design-led specification

Good house design is essential to ensure that insulation strategies are fully realised in practice. Early-stage specification decisions, including material selection, coordination



with structural and MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing) elements, and careful detailing, directly influence the thermal performance of the building. Integration with airtightness strategies and thermal bridge mitigation is also essential to achieving the intended U-values and overall energy efficiency.

Detailing & performance

Maximising the benefits of insulation in buildings requires accuracy in detailing. For example, ensuring junctions are appropriately designed and constructed will make a significant contribution to reducing



heat loss. Responsible for up to 30% of a dwelling's heat loss, thermal bridges occur at breaks in insulation at junctions and openings, causing heat loss which can affect internal temperature and an increased demand for heating. Success hinges on rigorous quality control throughout both design and construction with good detailing necessary at every junction and interface.

With little or no maintenance needed for the insulation once installed, energy efficiency is built into the building fabric for the life of the building. By reducing the total energy consumption of a building, the size and capacity of any renewables can be reduced, which could reduce capital and running costs.

Health, wellbeing & social impact

Well insulated buildings can also yield significant benefits for users and occupants as high thermal performance provides excellent internal conditions during both the winter and summer months.

Other social benefits associated with better insulation are the reduction and potential elimination of fuel poverty, as a greater proportion of heat is retained more effectively in homes with superior fabric.

Maximising the benefits of insulation in buildings requires accuracy in detailing

The provision of an enhanced envelope results in a reduced overall fuel demand, for more comfortable living conditions over winter months, compared with buildings with poorer thermal performance.

Future-proofing homes

The best opportunity to meet the UK's housebuilding targets without sacrificing quality and to future proof our homes, starts with energy efficient fabric – but must also include wider strategies for ventilation, airtightness and the inclusion of renewable technologies such as solar PV and heat pumps. Specifying such a combination of solutions can play a huge part in ensuring that new housing is compliant today, but also resilient and adaptable to the climate challenges of tomorrow.

Article provided by the Insulation Manufacturers Association (IMA)



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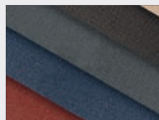


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Colorcoat Prisma® – Textured is designed to offer a unique look and feel, combining contemporary aesthetics with the durability and long-term performance expected from the Colorcoat Prisma® brand. Now, updated test results have confirmed that Colorcoat Prisma® – Textured is certified Ruv5, in accordance with the EN 10169 standard.

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Collaboration is the key to Future Homes success

Ashley Cooper from WMS Underfloor Heating explores the latest developments surrounding the Future Homes Standard, and highlights why selecting suppliers who are ready for collaboration is crucial to achieving the low-carbon transition.

Marking a decisive shift for the sector, the introduction of the much anticipated Future Homes Standard (FHS) is set to fundamentally change the way new UK homes are designed and heated.

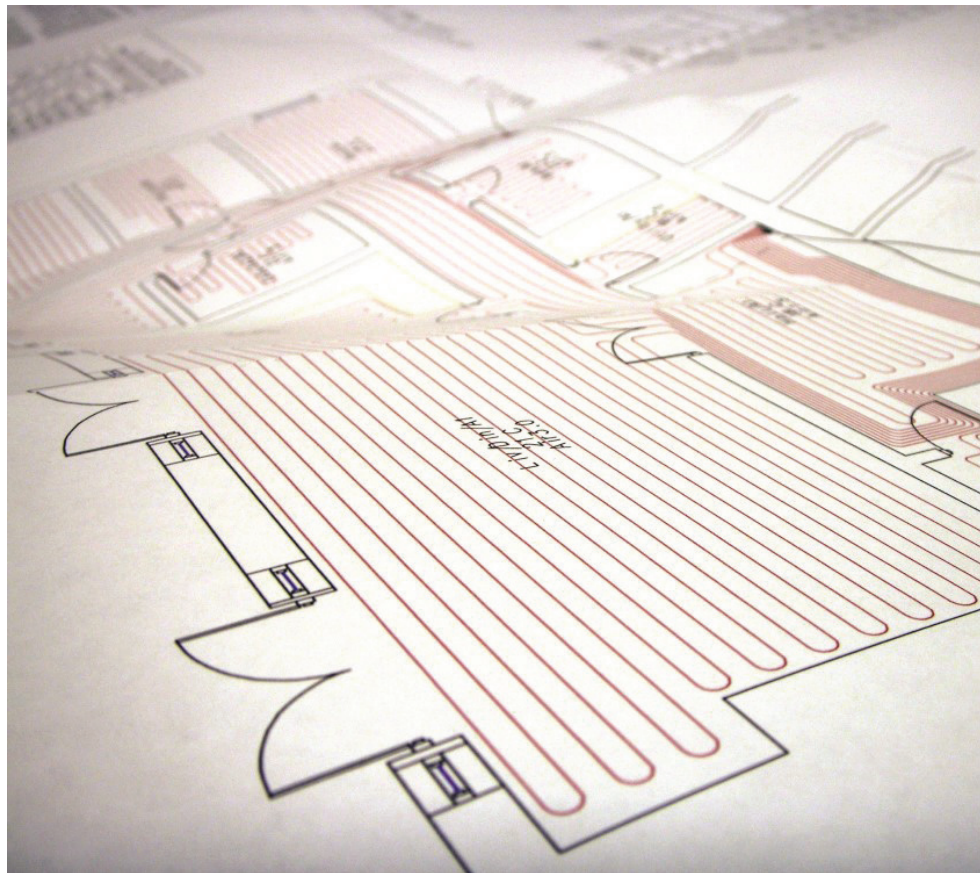
Current information indicates that the primary focus will continue to be on significantly reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency, ensuring newly built homes lead the UK's low-carbon transition. Coupled with the nation's 2050 net zero target, this emphasis has driven substantial changes in the design and construction of these properties.

While the finer details of the FHS are unknown, one thing is sure: those who anticipate the changes and act early will not only stay ahead of compliance but also shape best practices in sustainable design.

Optimising heat pump performance

With evolving targets and regulatory changes on the horizon, heat pumps are increasingly recognised as the leading low-carbon heating solution for new homes. To achieve peak performance, however, they must be integrated with compatible low-temperature heating systems. Hydronic underfloor heating (UFH), with its large surface area and low flow temperature requirements, provides the most effective heat emission. This configuration enables heat pumps to operate at optimal Coefficient of Performance (COP) levels, typically with flow temperatures between 35-45°C.

To provide the industry with the latest knowledge, Energy House 2.0, a research facility at the University of Salford, tested various heating systems to assess their performance in modern, new build homes. Alongside many other factors, the study



measured spatial air temperature, providing an accurate picture of how heating systems perform throughout the whole living space, identifying hot spots close to the heat emitter or thermostat, and colder temperatures further away.

The results were clear and UFH delivered the lowest temperature variations, compared to as much as 4°C from other technologies, and 2.2°C from traditional radiators. The performance was even



End user comfort is about more than just the average air temperature

better when the system ran continuously, further highlighting its efficiency in real world conditions.

However, end user comfort is about more than just the average air temperature; there must also be a focus on the time it takes a system to reach that temperature, heat loss during off periods, and overall running costs. All these factors impact the homeowner and occupier's experience. A system that costs less to run but is slow to warm up isn't performing well if comfort is only achieved late in the day.

Data from the Energy House 2.0 report shows that underfloor heating (UFH) delivers the most consistent comfort and efficient performance. Any negative cost differences are quickly outweighed when the achieved room temperatures and the additional running time required by alternative systems are taken into account. In addition, as radiant heat is distributed evenly across the floor, it eliminates cold spots where mould might develop. This

consistent warmth helps regulate humidity, reducing the risk of condensation and, thus, improving indoor air quality.

Powerful partnerships

As the long-awaited Future Homes Standard draws near, and regulations continue to evolve, the time is now for proactive system design, forward thinking specifications and close collaboration with suppliers capable of delivering fully compliant, low-carbon heating solutions with complete regulatory assurance.

Good heating isn't just about warmth. It needs to fit seamlessly into layouts, avoid hot and cold spots, and keep spaces evenly heated. Upfront savings can be misleading if energy bills and occupant comfort suffer. And true comfort comes from systems that heat efficiently, retain warmth, and distribute it consistently throughout a home.

Hydronic underfloor heating ticks all these boxes, offering a future-ready solution that works for both today's regulations and tomorrow's expectations.

Ashley Cooper is managing director at WMS Underfloor Heating

Smart cooling for smarter schools



In Lübeck, Germany, the Baltic School underwent a major renovation to accommodate 1,060 pupils in a modern, energy-efficient environment. The upgrade included triple-glazed windows, high-grade insulation, and advanced building services – laying the groundwork for a comfortable indoor climate year-round.

Passive cooling with a secure twist

While insulation simplifies winter heating, it complicates summer cooling. To tackle this, venetian blinds were installed on the south-

facing facades to reduce solar gain. At night, when temperatures drop, classrooms are cooled via Renson's 431 RC2 wall louvres – an elegant, secure solution that allows fresh air in while keeping insects and intruders out.

Design meets durability

Behind each louvre lies a standard window, discreetly operable from the inside. The RC2 classification ensures resistance against forced entry using tools like screwdrivers or pliers. Each louvre unit comprises tightly riveted blade packs, tested to withstand heavy

rain and storms – guaranteeing ventilation without moisture ingress.

Efficient ventilation, thoughtfully placed

With a free airflow of 40.5%, the louvres provide effective cross-ventilation. Two units per classroom, placed diagonally, ensure optimal air circulation. The entire €7 million project was funded by the Lübeck Possehl Foundation and executed by the city's building management.

www.renson.net



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warranty**



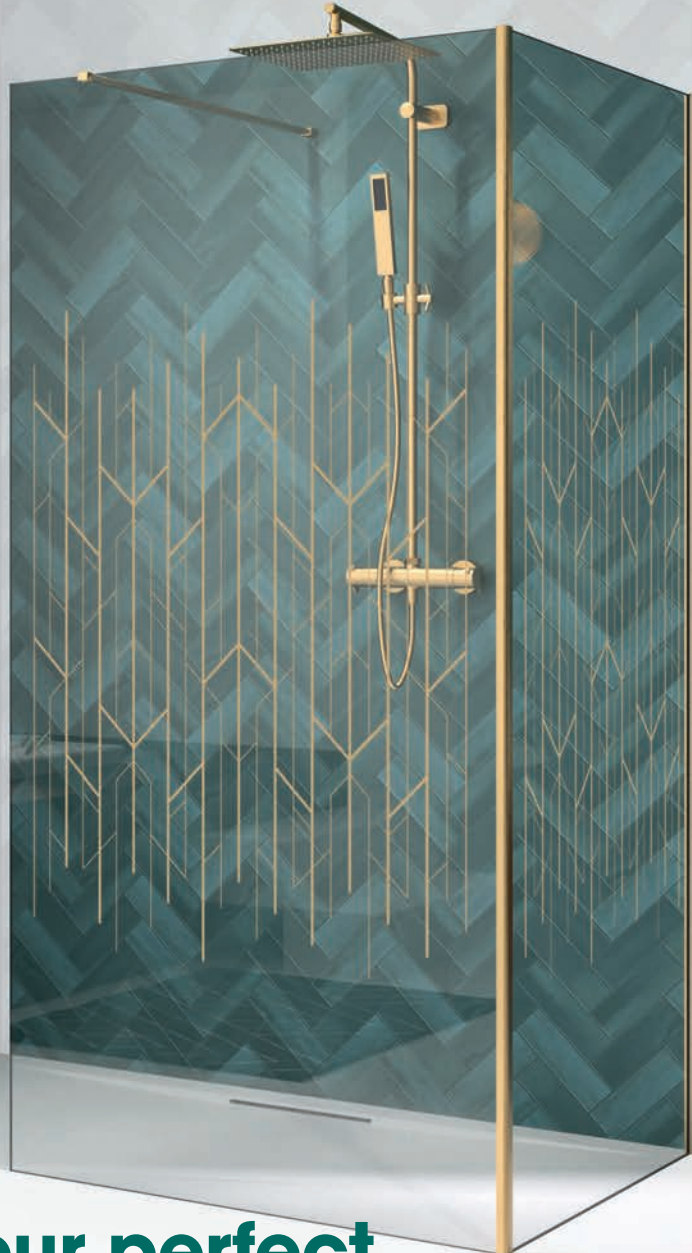
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maintenance**



**Ease of
installation**



**Height
2000mm**



Anti-limescale



**Easy
access**



**Left or right
installation**



6mm glass

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Easy installation, a great choice of configurations and expert assistance on hand from the Kinedo team.

From brushed gold to matt black profiles, fluted to Art Deco glass, the Kinedo walk-in range has the perfect design just for you! Their striking looks offer a high-quality solution that can be easily paired with Kinewall shower panels and one of our cuttable trays to create the perfect design for your bathroom.

The Kinedo team works with you; from site visits, installation training, technical assistance and first-class aftercare. For more information on the Kinedo range see our website or speak to the team – 020 8842 0033



[kinedo.co.uk](https://www.kinedo.co.uk)

Kinedo | **SFA** Saniflo

Gilberts brings Specsavers' ventilation into focus

The UK's biggest opticians Specsavers has focussed on a novel approach to create an "inspiring" workplace at its Nottingham offices. Even its ventilation reflects the brand and company activity.

Independent air movement specialist Gilberts Blackpool came up with the idea, optimising its capability to produce bespoke diffuser face plates for its innovative GA swirl.

Gilberts' technical team drew its inspiration from the iconic letter charts used in eye tests, creating an eye-catching perforated design in the face plate. Using its in-house test laboratory and air movement modelling software, Gilberts was able to validate the diffuser performance to ensure the quality and quantity of air circulation complied with requirements.

The swirls have been installed throughout the refurbished areas at Specsavers' Nottingham support offices. The design ethos for the revamped 44,00 ft² premises was to create an inspiring workplace for support office colleagues.

Gilberts' commercial sales manager



Martin Malyon, who was instrumental in the project, explained: "Our GA swirl looks completely different to anything else on the market, even before the face plate is personalised. The plate sits in front of a unique radial pattern air distribution impeller core which can be altered to achieve numerous swirl patterns depending on the space layout and occupancy below. It creates real visual impact that's out of the ordinary

and unlike anything else available.

"The project team was originally looking at our standard face plate design but loved the concept when we suggested a bespoke option. Our R&D team loved the challenge and quickly spotted how to bring relevance and fun to the design."

Hayley Morgan, Specsavers head of facilities management, added: "The end result is spectacular. The diffusers are already becoming the talking point for visitors to the building."

Gilberts' swirl diffusers are already the 'go to' choice for many major brands; they have been used in, among other projects, Uber's European Centre of Excellence, Primark's biggest UK store, Manchester Airport and Virgin's first UK hotel. The unique GA diffuser and the option for bespoke designs further enhances its desirability and offers clients an even more specialised service.

They are just part of the company's extensive range of grilles, diffusers and louvres for natural and mechanical ventilation.

01253 766911 info@gilbertsblackpool.com

Cool breeze – reducing overheating



Vectaire's Cool Breeze and Cool Breeze Plus are an effective solution for mitigating overheating in residential properties, meeting the standards used in CIBSE TM59 assessments and Approved Document O of the Building Regulations. They use R290, an eco friendly refrigerant over 225 times more environmentally friendly than R32. For floor or wall mounting, they integrate seamlessly with a Vectaire Maxi (or Maxi Plus) MVHR, offering a compact and energy-efficient approach to indoor temperature regulation. The self-contained, sealed-for-life system, delivers up to 4.1 kW (or 4.3 kW) total cooling capacity without the need for an external condenser. Cool Breeze units automatically sense the temperature of both the room and the incoming fresh air determining when cooling is required. Heat is removed from the supply air allowing the MVHR to distribute the cooled air throughout the property, providing a consistently comfortable temperature for residents. Vectaire MVHRs ensure good indoor air quality in every type of domestic environment complying with UK Building Regulations for mechanical ventilation with heat recovery.

01494 522333 www.vectaire.co.uk

Additions to the Stelrad Compact range



Stelrad has launched a range of 200 mm and 1,200 mm high radiators in a variety of sizes. The new radiator sizes offer a helpful additional range to slot into specifications and installations up and down the country. The new 200 mm sized radiators are available in K3 and K4 sizes whilst the 1,200 mm sized radiators come in K2 format. They come with a 10-year

warranty. Head to the website for all the advice you need on the right radiators for your installations and heating system designs.

0800 876 6813 www.stelradprofessional.com

Modern efficiency meets heritage



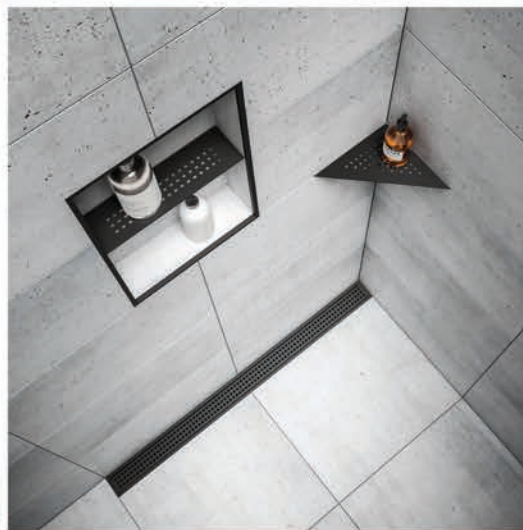
Hamworthy Heating has supplied its Modumax mk3 modular condensing boilers and Powerstock calorifiers to Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge. Installed within a Grade I

Listed building; the new system delivers

an efficient heating and hot water solution tailored to the unique challenges of the site. Hamworthy Heating's Modumax mk3 range is specifically designed with retrofit projects in mind. The modular format allows boilers to be dismantled and manoeuvred into confined spaces before being reassembled in position.

01202 662 552 www.hamworthy-heating.com

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www.simonswerk.co.uk



Refreshed Gradus Lunar Carpet collection

Gerflor is excited to unveil the renewed Gradus Lunar carpet tile collection, now featuring refined new muted colourways. Inspired by the serene beauty of the lunar landscape and the captivating hues of the cosmos, this collection is designed to elevate interior spaces with a touch of subtle elegance. The Gradus Lunar Carpet range brings the tranquil beauty of the moon into any environment. With six neutral designs reflecting the moon's subtle tones and five muted colours inspired by the cosmos, Lunar's versatile palette is perfect for creating open, flexible spaces or distinct zones. The random laying pattern ensures a unique and dynamic floor scheme every time, making it ideal for commercial offices, educational settings, and hospitality spaces. To complement the range, pair with Gerflor's world class Creation 55 Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT) in wood and mineral designs.

01625 428922 www.gerflor.co.uk

Altro flooring is top of the class

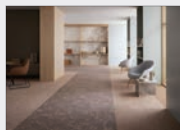


Bedford Academy has chosen eco-friendly flooring for its new-build school extension, opting for Altro Cantata adhesive-free and using the Recofloor vinyl take-back scheme on a project where sustainability considerations were a top priority.

The extension features Altro Cantata adhesive-free throughout the main areas and Altro Aquarius in the bathrooms and shower spaces. These floors are designed for durability, low maintenance, and sustainability, making them an ideal fit for a high-traffic educational setting. Find out more at www.altro.com/uk/explore-altro/learn-and-engage/altro-guides/adhesive-free-floors

enquiries@altro.com www.altro.com/uk

Tessera Tranquillity joins Forbo's Evolve+



Joining Forbo Flooring System's Evolve+ series of very low embodied carbon carpet tiles is Tessera Tranquillity. The fifth addition to the series, Tessera Tranquillity is designed with enhanced sustainability in mind, with one of the highest recycled content by weight

of any carpet tile collection and very low embodied carbon, all achieved without offsetting, the range offers a refreshed aesthetic, ideal for commercial projects. Inspired by patterns created by the soothing ebb and flow of water or natural rock formations, Tessera Tranquillity offers a refreshing take on organic design.

forbo-flooring.co.uk/tranquillity forbo-flooring.co.uk/evolve+

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360° room comfort

Bathtub to a shower – a smart solution with a tailored Plug & Play system from wedi

Whether you are travelling on business or on holiday, if you stay at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Copenhagen, you are guaranteed relaxing moments in a luxurious ambience. The complete modernisation of bathrooms in this 5-star hotel contributes to the overall experience – thanks to the tried-and-tested wedi system solutions, guests can now enjoy invigorating showers.

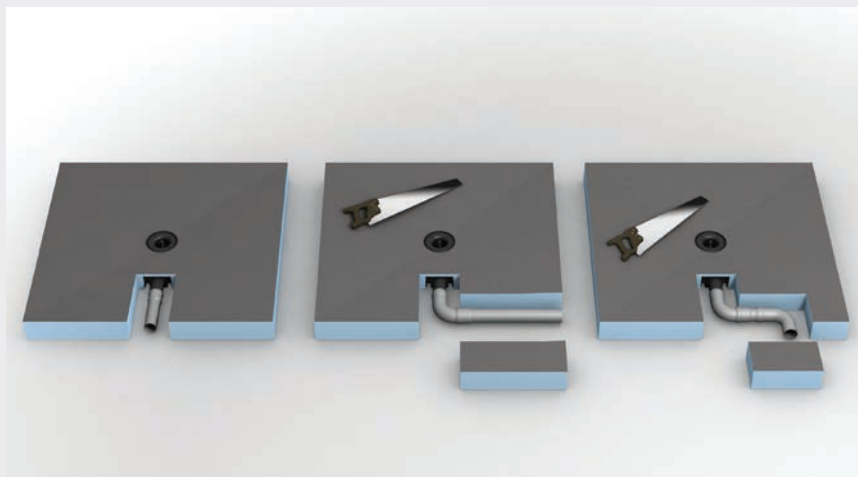
The world's leading hotel chain entrusted the bathroom and wet room specialist wedi with the renovation of 406 bathrooms. The clients were looking for a solution that not only fulfilled the highest standards in terms of design and quality, but could also be installed quickly without requiring much coordination between trades on site. Thanks to key advantages such as the prefabrication of components during manufacturing according to individual specifications, they chose wedi's clever plug & play solutions. 122 bathrooms over three floors (9-11) have already been renovated in this idyllic waterfront hotel after five months of construction. Not an easy task to say the least, especially because the hotel must remain operational during the entire renovation.

Low construction height: Fundo Integro

The transformation of the bathtubs into low-threshold showers formed the central part of the project, and the biggest technical challenge was the implementation of the drainage as desired by the customer – due to the local legislation an overflow was required. wedi took on the challenge and made this possible in a smart way: a custom-made version of the Fundo Integro shower element has been developed especially for the Marriott Hotel with both a point and a linear drainage integrated into the shower element, whilst keeping the total installation height at an incredible 93 mm!

Save time with the wedi system

The wedi Fundo Integro shower element is available in the standard wedi assortment: it includes a standard-compliant DN50 point drainage and this is precisely what makes it perfect for such complex refurbishment projects. Completing the installation,



the interlocking walls of the shower enclosures were also specially designed for the Copenhagen Marriott Hotel project. The products perfectly combine design and technology, and this is why both the architect and the client trusted wedi with this challenging project.

The best of all: Seamless design surfaces from wedi

The ready-to-install Fundo Top surfaces from wedi ensure the luxurious look of the new wellness showers; instead of tiles underfoot, the clients opted for large format, tailor-made design surfaces in “flake white”. Thanks to their shapes and slopes being coordinated with one other, the Fundo Top simply needed to be bonded to the Fundo shower element. Top design surfaces however make not only the cladding of shower floors but also the cladding of walls straightforward. The design surfaces are anti-slip and waterproof in the overall wedi system. With everything prefabricated in the factory precisely fit together on site, the intelligent system concept eliminated the need for complex installations and labour intensive tiling & grouting. Overall, this not only saved a lot of time, but also meant significantly less noise and dirt during construction.

Satisfaction of all parties involved

This was not least due to the efficient interaction of all those involved. The local

team on site and the wedi technology and production in Germany have overcome all challenges, and the project went smoothly. The result is exclusive and inviting: the groutless appearance transforms both the floor and the wall areas into a visual delight. The interplay of light and the flakes within the wedi Top material create reflections that highlight the fluidity of water conveying a serene, contemporary look. The thoughtful design marries form and function into a seamless and invigorating shower experience, so no wonder why the new bathrooms at the Copenhagen Marriott Hotel attract the attention of international guests.

0161 864 2336
www.wedi.net

Project details

Main contractor: Madsen & Kastberg A/S

Client: Bella Group Development and ATP-Ejendomme

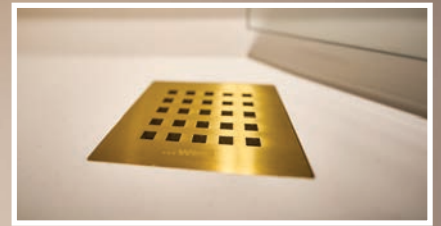
Architects: Urban Agency, Copenhagen

Products: wedi Fundo Integro (custom-made incl. point and linear drainage), special wedi Installation wall, wedi Fundo Metallic Gold drain cover, wedi Fundo Top “flake white”, wedi Top Wall “flake white”

Modernised form Enhanced function

BESPOKE DESIGN IS AVAILABLE

E.G. with added overflow channel
to conform with local requirements



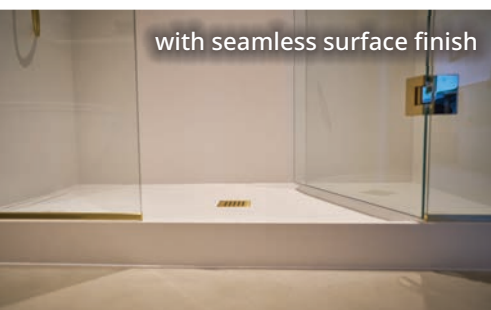
Marriott Hotel,
Copenhagen



from bathtub



into shower



with seamless surface finish

Perfect compliance with sustainable requirements

Fundo shower elements with or without integrated drainage

(shown: bespoke wedi Fundo Integro with a total installation height of just 93mm including integrated drainage)

Seamless, preformed design surfaces for the shower floor

(shown: Flake white)

Large format, panel type design surfaces for walls

(shown: Flake white)

Metallic drain covers to match bathroom fittings

(shown: Metallic Gold)

- ✓ Fully tanked, directly tileable floor-to-ceiling system
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Wood Without Limits: Bespoke by Havwoods



Havwoods continue to showcase the potential of 'Bespoke by Havwoods' – a concept, not a collection, created to transform bold ideas into beautifully crafted spaces. From custom plank sizes and patterns to intricate design panels and distinctive surface finishes, Bespoke gives designers, architects and specifiers the freedom to refine every detail. Whether meeting specific certification requirements or incorporating bespoke inlays, the service provides limitless creative possibilities. Every Bespoke project is the result of close collaboration between the client, designer and material. By combining advanced production techniques with traditional artistry, Havwoods delivers surfaces that are as technically robust as they are visually striking. This collaborative approach ensures each design not only reflects the personality of the space but also adapts seamlessly to its setting. Transforming one-of-a-kind ideas into stunning reality, 'Bespoke by Havwoods' ensures the highest standards of quality and delivers truly unique interiors that will stand the test of time. Extending beyond flooring to walls, ceilings and other applications, the service empowers creativity across both residential and commercial projects.

01524 737000 www.havwoods.com/uk

Extended design range and wider colour choice

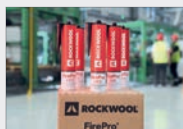


Altro has refreshed and expanded its Altro Tegulis and Altro Walls ShowerKit collections, introducing an array of new tile-effect options for Altro Tegulis and a broader spectrum of colours and designs for Altro Walls ShowerKit.

These enhancements provide greater design flexibility and more creative choices than ever before, ensuring that every project can be tailored to suit contemporary tastes and needs. Both ranges now include woods, minerals, weaves, concretes, and marble designs, aligning with modern trends, and Altro Tegulis features new tile patterns, offering a luxurious and durable look.

enquiries@altro.com www.altro.com/uk/products/walls-doors/walls

ROCKWOOL's new product range



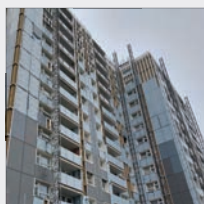
Sealant from the new ROCKWOOL FirePro® fire-stopping range, manufactured at Hams Hall, Birmingham

ROCKWOOL has announced the first products to launch from its new global centre of excellence for fire-stopping. The company has used its deep fire expertise and state-of-the-art manufacturing facility to develop a new in-house fire-stopping range including coated batt, sealants, collars and wraps.

The new FirePro range has been tested and classified to the most recent fire resistance standards (including BS EN 1366-4, BS EN 1366-3 and BS EN 13501-2) that will become mandatory in 2029, ensuring the range is ready a full four years early.

info@rockwool.com www.rockwool.com/uk/next-gen-firepro

Valcan system achieves BBA certification



Valcan is proud to announce that its VitraFix Magnelis Steel (VFM) subframe system has been awarded a BBA Agrément Certificate, confirming full compliance with UK Building Regulations and industry standards. This certification reinforces VitraFix VFM as a trusted solution for rainscreen cladding projects, delivering proven performance, safety, and

durability. Gavin Besley, operations director at Valcan, commented: "Our goal is to achieve certification across the entire Valcan range."

valcan.co.uk/cladding-subframe-systems/vitrafix-magnelis

Latest news, views and more



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on products, services, events, and learning opportunities available from a wide variety of manufacturers and suppliers.

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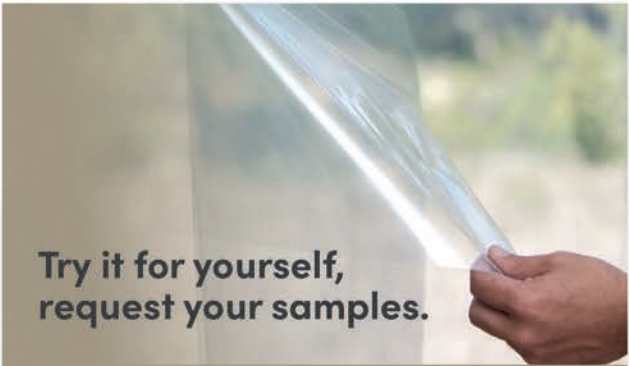
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Is a Fire Strategy a Legal Requirement?

A fire strategy is not an explicitly mandated legal requirement, but is essential for fulfilling broader fire safety obligations and ensuring regulatory compliance. Where buildings are erected or extended, or have undergone material change of use, Regulation 38 of the Building Regulations requires that a package of fire safety information must be assembled for the responsible person of the premises. A fire strategy is commonly used as a means for collating and providing that information.

Building Control Inspectors now typically require a fire strategy to be submitted as part of the plans approval or at construction stage, to demonstrate that the design complies with Building Regulations. Changes to the regulatory framework for fire safety following the 2017 Grenfell Fire tragedy, including the Building Safety Act 2022 and updates to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, further reinforce this approach.

A fire strategy document reviews all aspects of a building's fire safety features including construction, compartmentation strategy and means of escape. This includes management



Neil Triggs, Inspectas Director of Property & Construction Compliance

arrangements to ensure it is fit for use for the end user or intended purpose group. Building Regulations Approved Documents (AD-B) are used predominantly as guidance for achieving the requirements of the Building Regulations. Alternative approaches may be used, including those described in BS 9999, BS9991 2024, or a fire engineered approach in developing a fire strategy. The strategy will consider:

Building characteristics & occupancy profile

Site Location; Building Characteristics; Occupancy Profile

Specific design considerations

Rooms with Special Fire Hazards

Means of warning and escape

Evacuation Strategy; Fire Detection and Alarm Call; Escape Routes; Travel Distances; Inner Rooms; Protected Corridors & Dead Ends; Doors; Emergency Lighting; Fire Safety Signage

Internal fire spread (linings)

Overview; Fire Spread and Lining Materials

Internal fire spread (structure)

Overview; Load Bearings Elements of Structure; Fire Compartmentation; Concealed Spaces (Cavities); Protection of Openings and Fire Stopping

External fire spread

Overview; External wall materials (combustibility and fire spread); External Escape Staircases; Cavities

Access and facilities for the fire service

Requirements of Part B5; Fire Responders Access; Provision of Private Hydrants

0800 264 0094 inspectas.co.uk

Titon renews Secured by Design licence for another year



Titon Hardware is proud to announce the renewal of its Secured by Design (SBD) licence for another year. This renewal highlights Titon's ongoing commitment to providing high-quality, security-focused products that meet the stringent standards set by the official UK Police initiative. Secured by Design, part of the UK Police Service, recognises companies that produce security products capable of deterring and reducing crime. By maintaining its SBD licence, Titon demonstrates that its key security products – Asterion II profile cylinder, friction hinge range, hinge guards and Overture E window handle – continue to meet the rigorous testing and certification requirements demanded by the scheme. "We are delighted to have renewed our Secured by Design licence once again," said Robin Gardiner, head of product development for Window & Door Hardware at Titon. "This accreditation reflects our focus on product quality, innovation, and safety – our customers can be confident that Titon products not only perform efficiently but also provide proven, police-recognised protection." For more information about Titon's range, visit the Secured By Design website.

sales@titon.com products.titon.com/hardware

Next generation locking system from FUHR offers security and modularity



FUHR's autosafe 835 multipoint door lock is meeting market demand and has already been incorporated by some of the industry's leading system houses, thanks to its innovative DuoSecure technology, smooth operation and modularity. "Choosing the right lock for any project is of course important for the security of a building, but locks are now about so much more," explains Paul Balfe, business development manager for FUHR UK. "Specifiers need to consider the intended application and the accompanying checklist of requirements, i.e. whether the lock is for an external or internal door; the need for fire safety and accessibility; the relevant building regulations; and how durable the lock is for the wear and tear it will be subjected to. The autosafe 835 multipoint locking system is a great option for a wide variety of projects because not only does it offer premium levels of security with its innovative DuoSecure technology, but its modularity also offers excellent flexibility." The DuoSecure technology utilised in the autosafe 835 automatic door lock means that on closing it is always locked with two latching bolts and two hook bolts.

pbalfe@fuhr.co.uk www.fuhr.co.uk

greenteQ cylinder guarantees peace of mind

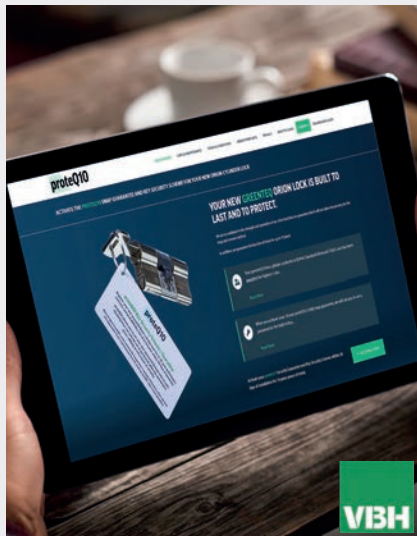
Sales of greenteQ Orion 3 Star profile cylinders continue to rise, according to hardware supplier VBH.

As a TS007 Kitemark 3 Star rated cylinder, Orion is the top-level profile cylinder in the greenteQ range, which also includes the entry level 6 pin Gamma, and TS007 1 Star Q-Star products. All greenteQ cylinders are supplied with a full 10-year performance guarantee.

Orion is available in nickel, brass, key/key, and thumb turn variants, all of which can be keyed alike for multi-door installations. As well as its independently verified resistance to attack, Orion includes a number of additional features that VBH says are particularly well received by the general public.

When the homeowner receives their new door or buys an Orion to replace an existing cylinder, they immediately see that each Orion product is supplied with five keys as standard, which should be ample for the average household.

When they read the information card that is provided with the keys, the homeowner will find details of the proteQ10 anti-snap



guarantee and this is, perhaps, what really grabs their attention.

Gary Gleeson of VBH advises: "proteQ10 is a simple concept. We guarantee that Orion

will not allow a successful break in due to snapping in situ and removal for the course of the 10-year guarantee. If this happens, we will pay the registered homeowner £2,000.

The door manufacturer or installer do not get involved in any registrations, claims, or additional key cutting. Orion's info card tells the homeowner how to register for their guarantees online and even provides a QR code to take them directly to the registration page. Additional keys can be ordered by the end user directly from any of VBH's online approved proteQ10 key partners."

Gary advises that at the time of writing, VBH have received approaching 40,000 registrations. "From the quantity of registrations that we receive we can clearly see that the peace of mind that our 10-year performance and anti-snap guarantees provide are important to end-users."

To find out more about greenteQ Orion 3 Star profile cylinders or any other hardware in the VBH range, call or email VBH.

01634 263263 sales@vbhgb.com



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